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CONTEMPORARY POLITICAL PORTRAITS.

(1)

NAPOLEON THE THIRD:

BY

A. DE LA GUÉRONNIÈRE,

EDITOR OF "LE PAYS,"—JOURNAL DE L'EMPIRE.

TRANSLATED BY LIEUTENANT-COLONEL CHARLES GILLIESS.

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NOTICE FROM THE PUBLISHERS.

THE very remarkable work here submitted to English readers is from the pen of M. de la Guérronnière, an eminent French publicist, and the responsible editor of "*Le Pays*"—*Journal de l'Empire.*

The eloquent style of the work, and its important subject, are sufficient motives for its re-publication in England, without discussing the correctness of the Author's opinions upon many political points. The reader will know how to reject any speculative views of an able foreigner that may not agree with English ideas. With respect to the main purpose of the work, namely, its favourable development of the character of the Emperor of the French, the publishers aim only at giving a rigorously faithful translation of the narrative which places that character in the broadest of lights.

It is the settled principle of British policy to respect the absolute independence of the French in the management of their own affairs. But we are deeply interested in their weal and woe; for mighty are the mutual influences of great events on both sides of the Channel.

Upon the single topic of Free Trade, which is touched

upon cautiously in this work, how vast will be the amount of good to France, if public opinion in that country shall be guided by what our commercial changes have already done for us, and sanction prudent, vigorous measures for the *entire liberty of universal exchange*. It was the first Napoleon (as the *Times* has just opportunely told the English world) who said, that the future prospects of France depend upon the adoption of that principle. Napoleon III. can effect this; for, by a recent decree, the regulation of French tariffs is left absolutely to his discretion, and a liberal improvement of French commercial policy on his part is, perhaps, to be the great test of his real desire for peace. The benefits to be conferred on the French by such improvement cannot be estimated at too high a rate. For their statistics show that they now lose annually, upon fuel and ironwares alone, not a fraction less than 925,000,000 of francs, or £37,000,000 sterling, in money and in the quality of the tools and the goods daily used and sold by their millions of cultivators and artizans!

INTRODUCTION.

BETWEEN satire, which is criticism carried beyond all bounds, and panegyric, which is exaggerated eulogy, stands the genuine portrait of character, which is truth itself, because it is the impress of nature.

I shall attempt to paint the genuine portraits of the remarkable men of the age. My mind does not shrink from the difficulty of discharging the task with sufficient skill; nor is my conscience alarmed at the greater difficulty of dealing with this task with due impartiality. Without sharing the sanguine views of the optimist, who takes no account of the failings of mankind, and who overrates the hopes of humanity; and equally disinclined to admit the more adverse judgment of another school, who estimate too low the prospects of society; I will endeavour to see things and men as they really are, and to contemplate them from far beyond the influence of party spirit and its

passions. This is the only engagement I can take upon myself at the commencement of a work, still more delicate than it is difficult. Renown, popularity, glory, and power, are like those flattering and delusive mirrors which coquettes delight to look in, that they may again behold their faded charms, flattered in the pleasing reflection. These circumstances smooth away wrinkles and deformities, presenting nothing but the shapes and the lines of eternal youth. Sometimes, however, a faithful mirror is of use:—whilst showing us to ourselves as we are, it helps us to become what we wish to be. It is this unerring glass that I intend to place before the political men of my day; not only that they may know themselves, but that, being known, public opinion may correctly judge them. In doing this, I am actuated by a feeling which I may openly avow, for it is a homage I render to my country and the age I live in. The illustrious men of a great nation like France, are not only living types of her manners, ideas, opinions, transitions, civilisation, and genius, but they are also the witnesses of her greatness, which the world admits and history records. The era of Louis XIV. was a brilliant one, solely because it was that of Condé and Colbert, of Turenne and Bossuet, of Racine and Fénélon. The French Revolution

was gigantic, first in its heroism and its patriotism, and then in its crimes, only because it found giants to uphold and bear it along. The Empire is immortalised in the immortality of the Emperor. Our age has nothing to envy in those most privileged times. The soil of France is inexhaustibly fertile. The richness of her moral qualities readily answers to every call upon her powers. "There is in this nation enough wit to give life to all Europe," said the eloquent Ventura, whose own evangelical voice sows the seeds of faith and charity in so many souls. This was not a mere compliment of Italian courtesy, it was the acknowledgment of a sagacious and nobly impartial mind. Yes; we are a great people, and we live in a great age! It is the evidence of this superiority that I am going to call up, by placing on their pedestals the celebrated men whose merits prove it. The nation, with becoming pride, will recognise those of her sons who have partaken of her existence only that they may uphold her in her glory and power, and that they may hereafter transmit both, enlarged and enriched, to future generations.

This portrait of Louis Napoleon Bonaparte, which I published more than a year ago in fragments, now appears in a complete form.

The merit of this study of mine, if merit it have at all, lies in its date. Written at a time when the public had not yet learned to appreciate the imposing and mysterious personage, whose portrait I undertook to give, it came several months before the prodigious events that so rapidly justified my estimate of his character. I had pierced the shade in which nature veiled his great qualities. The clearness of my judgment was due to its impartiality alone. By rising to the lofty region of truth, I reached the pure light; by seeking to be just, I produced a work that was correct.

That work called forth far more comments than I had anticipated. It was discussed, eulogised, run down, as happens to whatever rouses men's warmest feelings. I seemed to have revealed some great secret, when I disclosed to view the extraordinary man who before only bore an important name. The surprising story of his whole life, some hopeless enterprises undertaken with unparalleled daring, the possession of power for three years, difficulties almost overwhelming,—but overcome by him with rare courage, and rare prudence,—snares avoided, intrigues defeated, advantages, that seemed altogether lost, regained by perseverance, and by skill,—all this indicated clearly enough with what a character nature

had gifted the model before me. I had only to look at it close to distinguish its great merits. This portrait, which I was to try to place in its true and broad light, at first surprised and moved me when contemplating it; and my emotion gave me a sort of presentiment of the great destiny which nature's study enabled me to predict. The appearance of an actor often suggests the part he is to play; so, when describing the man in this his drama, I very naturally disclosed something of its *finale*.

This *finale*, brilliant as it is seen by all to be, has completely removed all adventitious colours for one who now belongs to history. Louis Napoleon Bonaparte has reached the summit of his career, so that mistakes about him are no longer possible.

Whatever may be destined for him by Providence, the late events he has had so large a share in, give him a special personality beyond the reach of all contingencies. It is not an exaggeration to say, that his image is come full grown out of the throes of the revolution. This image is not very unlike the sketch I drew fifteen months ago, which leads me to publish a new edition of my work. I change nothing in it which events have not changed. I add only some parallels,

which seem to me to be curious, and some opinions which I think are sound.

When I first wrote, I was unable to give more than a fragment. Now the complete work can be produced. The 2nd of December is the date of a new era. All beyond it is in the decrees of Providence: history claims only what precedes it.

A. DE LA GUÉRONNIÈRE.

Paris, January, 1853.

NAPOLEON THE THIRD.

I.

The first portrait in my gallery is one which, at this moment, attracts the almost exclusive attention of the whole world. In the greatness of a name, Louis Napoleon Bonaparte has found the greatness of his own vocation. Born on the steps of a throne,—rocked on the knees of an emperor,—destined to an inheritance the most burthensome, but, at the same time, the most magnificent, which has ever shadowed a royal cradle,—educated in the veneration of his name, and in the almost religious belief in the destinies of his race; then overthrown, and tossed about by those changes and vicissitudes which seem to be the heir-loom of royalty, modern as well as ancient,—the son of the King of Holland and the Queen Hortense exhibits to our view one of those strange, mysterious, profound fatalities, of which the story, intricate and unravelled by Providence, cannot be explained. The drama of human life unrols itself entirely in this career. Contemplate the child whose eyes only open to be dazzled by the glory of his race. The first sounds that strike his ears are the echoes of victory, which waft his name even to the extremities of the earth, and transmit it to posterity. Life now appears all radiant, as if by

enchantment. Suddenly the scene changes,—an Empire totters. Europe, once beaten and humbled, again raises her head behind a million of soldiers; she advances in close columns through every inlet of that immense territory which, extended by recent conquests, had left far behind the original frontiers of France. She invades the soil of France; she dethrones that dynasty of war and battles, that made her tremble even on the banks of the Vistula and of the Neva. The Emperor abdicates, and retires into exile; his family, placed on thrones he had distributed among them, separates, and is dispersed through foreign lands. Queen Hortense—that charming woman, equally devoted and loved—carries her sons into her humble retreat at Arenemberg, situated on the shore of Lake Constance. Here all the finer nature of the woman is purified and exalted by the exquisite tenderness and inspired affections of the mother. The stern education of the exile succeeds to the soft and pliant nurture of the palace. The Prince, who was to have been taught to become a king, learns to become a man. He strives to play the soldier by joining in the exercises of the young Swiss officers summoned to the encampment at Thoun. The Revolution of July rouses him to action. Now he exchanges the dull cares of the exile for the hazardous life of the conspirator, and throws himself into Romagna, with his elder brother, to march upon Rome at the head of the insurgents. Carried off in the flight of this undisciplined army, dispersed at the first shock of the Austrian squadrons, he escapes with life only to witness the death of Charles Napoleon, and receive his last sigh. Worn out by suffering and fatigue—overwhelmed with grief—his footsteps tracked by the police—he is saved by his mother, who rejoins him at Ancona, leads him

across the French territory, from which an order of the Government expels him at once, and brings him to England, and thence to Switzerland.

Then commenced another scene of this so stormy life. The son of Napoleon dies; his nephew becomes his heir. The insurgent of Romagna takes up his position as Pretender, —he disdains a crown in Portugal,—he prepares the expedition of Strasbourg; the government does not put him on his trial, but transports him to America; he returns, to fail a second time at Boulogne. Vanquished, he is treated as a victim; the prison of Ham closes its portals on him. He escapes in disguise, and returns to France, at the proclamation of the Republic, as the avowed favourite of the people; six millions of suffrages elevate him to the Presidency. The statesman now takes the helm of affairs. This is his *Life*. We will return hereafter to the most curious and important episodes therein. First, let us examine the *Man*.

II.

What problem is this that presents itself to my pencil? I search for a light upon that face, and I see nothing but shade. On looking more closely at it, my mind is gradually led to recall that face, so dark, so sinister, so passionless and cold, which, in its day, was called "The Iron Mask." I have read somewhere in the annals of those times, that the jailors of that mysterious personage had remarked, that a strange phenomenon had exhibited itself in that terrible tragedy. The principle of life was so powerfully condensed beneath that inflexible covering —so intense a necessity to come to light was manifested, that

at certain moments it was revealed even through the polished steel, and animated it, as it might have done the human face. At those times the mask assumed the expression of nature. The veins seemed to palpitate, the lips to move, the eyes to brighten up, the temples to beat. The mask had transformed itself into man. In like manner, this face, in appearance so motionless and insensible, is but the mask of the man within, ardent and powerful. Those eyes are dull, but as profound as the thought in which they dive, and which rises at times in their orbits, as the flame rises from the hearth whence it derives its fire. That brow is gloomy as fate, but as expansive as creative genius. Those lips are colourless, but full of expression; delicately turned; severed—scarcely sufficiently parting, and open just to allow the curt and precise expression of a will emanating from deep reflection, and inexorably resolved. That voice is indolent and drawling, but self-reliant; and the indifference which shows itself is but the excess of that confidence. Courage concealed by timidity,—resolution disguised by gentleness,—inflexibility softened by mildness,—policy hidden by good nature,—life under marble,—fire under ashes: in a word, a something partaking of Augustus and of Titus, but with the face of Werther,—that type of German sentimentality. Such does Louis Napoleon Bonaparte appear.

III.

This portrait, sketched from nature, entirely explains the Man. It justifies the conflicting opinions that have been formed of him. We thus comprehend how some, with perfect sincerity, have contested the political superiority of Louis Napoleon

Bonaparte, whilst others have exalted his abilities even to hyperbole. Louis Napoleon is certainly a superior man; but that superiority is shy and unsuspected. His life is all concentrated within. His words do not betray his thoughts; his actions do not betray his designs; his look does not reveal the ardour of his spirit; his demeanour borrows nothing from his resolution. All his moral nature is, by some means, constrained and overruled by his physical firmness. He meditates, but does not argue; he decides, but does not deliberate; he acts, but does not feel the stimulus. His best friends do not know him intimately. He commands confidence, but never solicits it. On the eve of the expedition to Boulogne, General Montholon promised to follow him, without seeking to know where he would lead him. Each day he presides over the council of ministers, speaks little, listens to all, and yields nothing. With one abrupt word he cuts short a question, as by a military "order of the day."

Hence the impossibility of associating a parliamentary ministry to his councils. A parliamentary ministry would attempt to govern, and he would never yield his authority, even on condition of reigning. With this inflexibility of will, nothing wilful or absolute in manner, he governs without wounding. Queen Hortense used to call him her "*douce entêté*." This maternal appreciation was perfectly just. Louis Napoleon Bonaparte has that goodness of heart which tempers, and often dissembles, the workings of the mind. Somewhat English in his gait, manners, and conversation, his formality soon melts into kindness, which, in his case, is but the grace of feeling. Many have deceived themselves, mistaking his goodness of heart for weakness, and regarding his

affability as common-place. Self-possession is the basis of his character—he is absolutely master of himself; and his best conceptions only so far regulate his actions as he thinks fit himself to authorize their use. Easy to excite, impossible to lead away, he calculates everything, even his enthusiasm; and, in spite of his audacity, his heart is but the vassal of his head.

IV.

Two things are essential to form a perfect statesman. First, good sense, which is the exact and practical knowledge of what constitutes truth and justice; secondly, magnanimity, which is the inspiration from above, and clear intelligence guiding the reason and the will. It is the junction of these two elements, so rarely united in the most gifted minds, which forms the true statesman, and constitutes the genius of government. How few men of strong sense are at the same time high-minded; and how few high-minded men are at the same time men of strong sense. In truth, it appears as if God had created a certain incompatibility between the reason which admits only what is possible, and the imagination which admits only what is beautiful and sublime. Reason alone can only produce plain men of business, who must not be mistaken for statesmen. Imagination, by itself, only produces poets; gifted sometimes with a sort of second sight, but often deficient in practical views. Highly endowed natures are those who enjoy the rare privilege of raising themselves to the beautiful and sublime, without departing from the rational and possible. These natures alone are capable of conceiving and realizing the *possible* progress, in stopping at the limit which separates them from the absurd

and impracticable. Good sense supports them, at the moment when imagination stops and magnanimity elevates them. Louis Napoleon Bonaparte is capable of everything that is great, and incapable of everything which is not founded on sound sense. Audacity, with him, is the result of deep calculation, nothing more. His magnanimity is as tranquil as his judgment. His mind can pursue the highest conceptions without effort or labour. He is capable of the most brilliant actions without vanity, doing them with the calmest simplicity. He is a man of strong sense, because he acts on reflection. He is magnanimous, because he is noble and generous. Greatness is mingled in his nature with all the force of sound good sense.

This duplicate character may be traced, not only in all the actions of Louis Napoleon Bonaparte, but also in his writings. The style of the author resembles the policy of a statesman; its strength always makes amends for its brevity. The great idea is seen at once in a simple phrase. The most exact expression, in all its delicacy of light and shade, is never wanting to the thought. In every sentence that falls from his pen may be recognised a mind under the guidance of good sense, and at the same time elevated and dignified by the suggestions of a great soul.

V.

A curious and characteristic incident may here be cited. A representative, M. Antony Thouret, proposed an amendment to the Constitution, having for its object the exclusion from the Presidency of the Republic of all members of families having

reigned in France. This was a new insult; asking of their native land an act of repudiation against all her sons issued from the blood of her kings and heroes, who had acquired for their country glory and renown. This stupidity was simply in accordance with the logic of that period. M. Antony Thouret did not even feel himself called upon to lavish his eloquence to support his motion, so natural, republican, and just, did it appear to him. "I did not mount this tribune," cried he, on the 9th October, 1848, "to explain my motion at length, for it expresses an imperative duty, of which the feeling is in the conscience of every one of us. Besides, I do not wish to honour these pretenders by dwelling at any length on the subject of their individual claims."

Louis Napoleon Bonaparte unmoved, in his place in the Assembly, listened quietly and composedly to all these suspicious allusions to his name and himself. After he had heard all and borne all, he asked permission to speak, and advanced towards the tribune. I see him now, coming forward with measured step, careless of the malevolent looks which followed him, absorbed within himself in that inward strength which betrayed no sign of anger. The murmurs that met him neither troubled or disturbed him. Such as his attitude was before a hostile Assembly, such is he in the face of the most brilliant triumph of his popularity. When silence was at length restored, Louis Napoleon Bonaparte drew from his pocket a slip of paper containing only a few sentences. At every word he was interrupted by the grossest threats and the most insulting roars of laughter. He was not once excited or irritated; quietly putting back the slip of paper into his pocket, he descended from the tribune as quietly as he had mounted

ie, and regained his seat without appearing to notice what had passed,—his composure never failed him. Such is the MAN! What was to be thought of a composure as strange as it was new? Superficial people, who do not look below the surface, imagined they saw in it a proof of insensibility. "He is a dunce!" said M. Thiers; and this silly joke was much relished in the lobbies of the Assembly. But, profound observers began to see more clearly into this mysterious nature, and recognised in this invincible power of self-control, that faculty which enables a man to govern others by the empire of reason exercised over himself, and by that coolness which constitutes the heroism of warriors and statesmen.

VI.

Louis Napoleon Bonaparte is now the free and uncontrolled chief of the government. It depends on himself to become, whenever he pleases, the leader of public opinion. He is buoyed up by recollections closely linked with his name, by the boundless enthusiasm which the renown of his uncle awakes and excites, by the strong sympathy attracted by his personal character, and by the strong interests dependent on his success. But, he has not yet raised up from the depths of society, in his own favour, the torrent of public opinion which truly great men can guide, and which invariably advances their power with the public fortune. He has but boldly to throw himself upon the cause of progress and the people, to carry all France along with him. He is certain to gain as many hearts as his great uncle gained soldiers in his triumphal march from Grenoble to Paris. He will leave on the roadside a few remnants of old

parties; some few tattered rags of standards, the rallying points of days gone by; and some few honourable convictions and generous devotions, faithful to the last to what they believe to be due to their country. For this success, at this moment, one single thing is wanting in Louis Napoleon Bonaparte. It is the faculty of being himself the originator and first actor in great conjunctions. His will, all energetic as it is when once exerted, seems to flag, and only to be in command at certain periods, and under certain circumstances.* On some given day and hour he throws himself, deliberately and as if inspired, into an enterprise, almost recklessly,—without a chance in his favour. He marches against a country and a government, defended by four hundred thousand soldiers, at the head of ten partisans; he disembarks on the shore at Boulogne with a standard and an eagle; he heroically braves death at the base of the column of Napoleon the Great. He writes the message of 31st October against the parliamentary cabals that oppressed him; he cashiers the general, for whom was reserved, some foolish people thought, a revival of the part of Monk restoring another Charles II. In all these grave and decisive hours his firmness, his determination, wakes up to activity, but noiselessly, without any tumult or outbreak. His object gained, as suddenly he rests again. No! he prepares and plans, in seeming repose, for the next event. This apparent want of power to take the lead is the *acmé* of perfection in prudence. Louis Napoleon, shut up within a circle traced by his enemies, could not pass out of it without losing all. He awaited his

* It is proper to remark that this passage was written five months before the 2nd December. It treats of a point vehemently disputed in the journals of the day.

time tranquilly,—he retired. To retire in time, to advance at the propitious moment, such was the tact of Louis Napoleon in his conflict with the various parties who plotted his downfall. By this Fabian tact we understand the man, not only in his somewhat Asiatic nature, which, without abating the ardour, puts off the sudden bound, and which explains some seeming contradictions and frequently repeated changes in his policy. It was only by retreating that he was enabled to advance. Did an obstacle present itself in his path, he did not cut it away—no, he retreated before it, only to overleap it. One step to the rear for two in advance; thus, with a leap, sudden, unforeseen, and rapid as lightning, he bounded over all impediment, and seated himself more firmly in power.

Thus it came to pass, when the executive commission tried to banish him, he refused the office of member of the Assembly, conferred on him by the department of the Yonne, when elected. This refusal disarmed the Assembly and the Government. Two months after he returns, reinforced by a fourfold election, one of which named him representative for Paris. Thus again, after his elevation to the Presidency of the Republic, he gives entire satisfaction to the liberal and republican feeling of the Assembly, in naming a ministry in which Messrs. Odilon Barrot and Bixio were conspicuous. Soon after he makes use of this same ministry to obtain the abdication of this same Assembly. Thus, also, one day he allows the formal disavowal, by M. Odilon Barrot and M. de Tocqueville, of his letter to Colonel Edgar Ney. A little later he dismisses the ministry, sends the message of the 31st of October, the last blow to parliamentary influence. Thus, during the prorogation of 1850, he sacrificed General d'Hautpoul, who had given umbrage

to the majority and to General Changarnier. Thus he tolerates, without comment, the "order of the day" of the General-in-Chief of the army of Paris, which had assumed the tone of a master, and was a defiance of his authority: on the 10th January he dismisses General Changarnier from his command. Thus he accepts the hostile vote of the 18th January, 1851, and gives an apparent satisfaction to the Assembly; but, on the 24th of the same month, he writes a message in the Napoleon style, which throws all the blame of the crisis on the Legislative power, and makes the triumphant majority repent at leisure, by having ministers appointed, of which not a single one was a member of the Assembly. Louis Napoleon Bonaparte, therefore, whenever he has retreated, has done so to advance; he is not the man ever to advance only to retreat.

VII.

To understand perfectly a character after nature it must be viewed from every side, and sounded in its most intricate details. We have said Louis Napoleon Bonaparte has an excellent heart. We may add, that he has not great susceptibility for the refinements of poetry or art. A poem puts him to sleep,—a picture makes him yawn. His soul is not attuned to harmony. The spectacle of nature in its most sublime and touching beauties affects him but slightly. His mind is governed by an intelligence, positive and real, which measures everything with a compass, and weighs all things with scales. There exists at Windsor an admirable forest, whose trees had their summits lopped off on the day when the head of Charles I. fell beneath the axe of the executioner. As if nature had pro-

tested against this decapitation of royalty, these trees, cut off in the same manner, revivified the branches with their sap in so remarkable a manner that soon they acquired the growth of ages. A gifted woman, whose heart was impregnated with noble feelings, and who lived in the intimacy of Louis Napoleon, persuaded him to visit this forest, as one of the curiosities of the time. He went, and returned as unmoved as if he had taken a ride in the Bois de Boulogne, politely and wittily quizzing his noble friend on her romantic sensibility.

VIII.

Here we may quote another trait which will help to throw a clearer light upon a portrait, which I hope to sketch completely, before narrating and criticising the *Life* I am studying. It was in the month of October, 1848. The Prince Louis Napoleon Bonaparte was about to present himself as candidate for the Presidency of the Republic. He was attempting to gain over the different parties, without binding himself to any. He received everybody,—he listened to everyone's advice,—he gathered together the opinions of all, without ever emitting any of his own, or engaging himself in any way. A manifesto was absolutely necessary. General Cavaignac had written his, in his six months' power, with the point of his sword, in the acts of his military dictatorship. What would be that of his dangerous competitor? France was expectant. Louis Napoleon Bonaparte drew it up with that precision of thought and style which stamps, as with a seal, all his writings. From deference, rather than choice, he deemed it advisable to consult an eminent statesman, M. Thiers, who, in a memoir, had given his adhesion

to his claims, in the hope of becoming prime minister to one whom he looked upon as a prospective king. M. Thiers regarded the manifesto of Louis Napoleon as a thing wanting even in common sense, and, next day, he hastened to present him another, which the future President read with the most polite attention. "Permit me to remain myself," said he, returning the manuscript. M. Thiers, a little surprised, concealed his disappointment, and might have understood that the time was past when he harangued the French nation and Europe from behind the throne of a monarch, content to reign without governing.

IX.

"Abnegation or perseverance!" cried one day the President of the Republic, addressing the inhabitants of Lyons. What sort of abnegation did Louis Napoleon mean in pronouncing these noble words? As I am painting a portrait I must be sincere. Well! I do not believe that the nephew of the Emperor can or will quit the reins of power, which the marvellous concurrence of so many unforeseen events has placed in his hands. Is he capable of usurpation, in preferring his will and his claims to the rights and sovereignty of the French nation? Boldly I answer, and assert the contrary. He will not usurp the supreme power; but he is sincerely convinced that France will confer it on him. Is this a vulgar ambition? No! I hasten to say it is something more noble,—it is faith. He believes in his name. He is convinced that the Empire has left in the native soil roots, so deeply implanted and so vigorous, that the race of Napoleon has but to spring up full of sap and strength, to bear all the fruits of the French revolution and the

new democracy, and protect society and civilisation from all storms. Such is his faith. A noble faith after all, and which attests a great mind and a great ambition. I hold in my hand a very curious and beautiful letter addressed, from Ham, to a noble lady* in England. Although this correspondence is unpublished, I can publish it, for it is historical, and, besides, it does honour to the name that signs it. I owe this precious document to a person in whom the President will readily recognise a friend of his exile, and one who has not been a courtier in his prosperity. Count d'Orsay has closely observed Louis Napoleon. He has lived in the strictest and closest friendship with him; no one was more sincerely devoted to him. In wishing to convince me of the exalted sentiments of the nephew of Napoleon, he once handed to me this letter as a testimony and justification of the sympathy and cordial concurrence he gave, in 1848, to his cause. This testimony I owe to truth, and I here discharge the debt.

"Ham, 13th January, 1841.

"My Lady,—I have only this day received your letter, dated 1st of January, because, being written in English, it was sent to the ministry at Paris that it might be read there. I am very sensible of your kind remembrance of me; and it grieves me to think that no letters from you previously have ever reached me. I received from Gore House but one letter from Count d'Orsay, which I hastened to reply to when in the Conciergerie; I regret deeply that it was intercepted, for I therein expressed all the gratitude I felt for the interest he

* It is almost superfluous to state, that the late Countess of Blessington is here alluded to.—TRANSLATOR.

took in my misfortunes. I will not repeat to you all I have suffered. Your poetic and noble heart will have anticipated all the cruelty of a position where my defence is bounded by insurmountable barriers, and my justification restrained by necessary reserve.' In this case, the only consolation to every calumny, and to the hardships of my fate, is to feel at the bottom of my heart a voice that absolves me; to receive marks of sympathy from superior minds who, like you, Madam, are separated from the common herd by the elevation of your sentiments, by the independence of your character, and whose affections and opinions are not made subservient to the caprices of fortune or the fatality of destiny.'

"I have been some three months in the Castle of Ham, with General Montholon and Dr. Conneau, but all external communication is forbidden. No one as yet has been able to obtain permission to see me. One of these days I will send you a sketch of the citadel, which I copied from a little print, for you may imagine I know nothing of the fortress from the outside. I often think of the spot you inhabit, and I recall with pleasure the moments passed in your amiable society, which the Count d'Orsay rendered still more delightful by his witty and natural gaiety. However, I have no wish to leave my present abode, for here I am in my place. *With the name I bear, I must have either the obscurity of a dungeon, or the light of power.* If you condescend, Madam, to write to me sometimes, and to give me some details of London life, and of a country where I have been too happy not to love it, you will confer on me a great pleasure, &c. &c. &c.

"NAPOLEON-LOUIS."

This letter, as touching as it is significant, contains a sentence which deserves to be remembered, it is this:—"HOWEVER, I HAVE NO WISH TO LEAVE MY PRESENT ABODE, FOR HERE I AM IN MY PLACE. WITH THIS NAME I BEAR, I MUST HAVE EITHER THE OBSCURITY OF A DUNGEON, OR THE LIGHTS OF POWER." This explanation, which comes from a dungeon, will be a perpetual comment on the rest of this work.

X.

The Empire seemed for ever at an end. In 1836 who thought any longer of the family of the Emperor? The last fading ray of that wonderful period had just expired in the Palace of Schœnbrünn. Few, and dispersed over different parts of Europe, the cotemporary heroes of the Great Captain, unknown or forgotten in France, were the sole remains of the founder of that dynasty which public enthusiasm had sanctioned between two great triumphs.

A woman whom we have already named, the Queen Hortense, still preserved a place in the hearts of all classes,—a popularity due to her gracious disposition, which time spares and misfortune ennobles. She was not forgotten, because she was loved. The Emperor, who had conquered Europe and subjugated the Revolution, might well leave behind him some conscientious men to accuse him—some resentments to persecute him,—some frustrated ambitions to hate him. The charming, tender woman—the impassioned mother—was better formed to meet with feeling hearts to pity her; her mournful shadow passing over the remembrance of this epoch like to the image of love, of goodness, of charity, in the midst of carnage,

mourning, and death. From the depths of exile she threw over this Empire in ruins the charms of her misfortunes, of her resignation, of her heroism, the prestige of her beauty. It is near this woman and this mother, in the modest retreat of her choice, that the drama was prepared, in which the incidents of the last fifteen years, which we have passed in review, were commenced, and of which the ultimate result is still a mystery of the future, and the secret of God.

XI.

The dynasty of July had then existed only six years. This was little for a power so badly consolidated; it was too long for its popularity, already declining. Public feeling supported it no longer. The various parties contended with each other; factions were conspiring; assassins were preparing, in the gloom of their ferocious vengeance, those infernal machines which were to send forth their slaughter amidst parades and official ceremonies. Alibaud had just succeeded Fieschi in the abominable family of regicides. Europe, anxious and alarmed, looked with dislike and restlessness on that accidental royalty, whose origin humbled and threatened her thrones. It was one of those periods, moments of uncertainty and transition, which unsettle men's minds by alternate hopes and fears, and which seem to hold out a chance for every adventurer, and a hope to every pretender.

The nephew of the Emperor, who had become his heir by the death of the Duke of Reichstadt, observed with attentive anxiety the various appearances of this situation of things. He felt the pulse of public opinion. He listened eagerly, to catch every

rumour that was wafted to him by the winds of his country. He endeavoured to communicate with men eminent by their talents, or whose reputations had placed them at the head of public opinion. He sought a secret intelligence with the army, in sending to the old generals whose fortunes had been linked to those of his uncle, a recollection and a name. In a word, he prepared himself for the part he believed himself called upon by fate to play, only waiting for circumstances to fix the hour for the accomplishment of his destinies.

XII.

Already, in 1833, had the young Bonaparte held long and serious conversations with a person of considerable importance, who had encouraged his aspirations. Lafayette, cruelly disappointed in his illusions of the Hôtel de Ville, could well believe that this name, which he had himself proscribed, might become his avenger and that of his country. Carrel received overtures from the Prince. In the republicanism of Carrel there was a something inflexible and absolute, which reconciled him to the name of Napoleon. His nature, his convictions, his life, his studies, taught him to look upon democracy more as a form than as a dogma; an enthusiastic patriot, he scarcely deigned to throw a look beyond the horizon of his native land, to perceive the progress of humanity which is as infinite as space. His patriotism eclipsed his zeal for universal freedom. His style was correct, precise, vigorous, as the march of a regiment; you would not have perceived in his words the passing breath of a great impulse. More eminent by character than by genius, he impressed more by his authority

than by his great abilities. His life was a constant struggle. He looked like a hero of antiquity wandering about the forum of modern liberty. Carrel did not shew himself absolutely adverse to the possible advent of the nephew of the Emperor, in the event of the triumph of democracy. Questioned on this subject by a friend of the Prince, he answered in these terms:

"The political and military works of Louis Napoleon Bonaparte announce a strong head and a noble disposition; the name he bears is the greatest of modern times, it is the only one which can strongly excite the sympathies of the French people. If this young man knows how to comprehend the rising interests of France; if he can forget his rights to an imperial legitimacy only to remember the rights of the sovereignty of the people; he may one day be called upon to play a great part."

Carrel was a true prophet. The imperial legitimacy only acquired for him, its representative, the double failure of Strasbourg and Boulogne, and a prison at Ham. The sovereignty of the people has given him the first place at the head of a free nation.

XIII.

In penetrating into the motives that urged on Louis Napoleon Bonaparte to anticipate, as it were, his destiny, I meet with two which it is necessary I should specify. He was convinced, in the first place, that Bonapartism existed in France in a latent state, and that a spark would be sufficient to cause its explosion. He thought, besides, that his birth and his name did not permit him to remain in a resigned and

indolent exile; and, as he wrote in the very curious letter which I have here made public, he conceived that he had but to choose "BETWEEN THE OBSCURITY OF A DUNGEON, OR THE LIGHT OF POWER."

This double impulse was so irresistible, that he imagined sincerely that he had but to show himself on the frontier to raise up and lead on the whole of France. He calculated on a second return from Elba; he could not dream for a moment that the army would hesitate between its sworn fidelity and its glorious reminiscences. To his mind, the Restoration and the Monarchy of July presented themselves as the results of accident; in the logical order of things the Empire was natural and necessary to regenerated society in France; the year 1814 opened the interval—the year 1836 seemed called to close it. In the month of July, 1836, Louis Napoleon Bonaparte went to Baden, in order to be nearer to France, and to hold himself in readiness for every event, and to turn it to his advantage. There it was that he met for the first time Colonel Vaudrey, who commanded the 4th Regiment of Artillery, in garrison at Strasbourg. This regiment was the very same in which the Emperor had first distinguished himself at Toulon, and which, at a later period, proud of the recollection, received him with transport at Grenoble, and formed his escort on his triumphal march to Paris. Colonel Vaudrey had distinguished himself by high feats of valour at Waterloo; he had cherished in his heart the resentment of this defeat, with his devotion to his standard. A man of the world, of elegant manners, affable and easy, his impressions were rapid, his sentiments elevated,—sometimes too frivolous, perhaps, but never interested, selfish, or swayed by the love of gain. More rash

than daring, his rashness was but the impulse of his devotedness to his cause. He did not weigh the hazard of the attempt. He yielded solely to his fond and enthusiastic recollections of the Empire. In forgetting the obligations of discipline, he believed he was serving France. He was a combatant, not a conspirator; he did not miscalculate, for his decision depended on his feelings. His duty lay, not in his oath, but in his faith in Napoleon's star. This man found his place naturally marked out in the events preparing at Strasbourg. Louis Napoleon saw him, pleased and gained him over; he associated him in his plans, his hopes, and ulterior intentions. A more important auxiliary, although a less conspicuous one, became attached to the cause of Louis Napoleon. This was M. de Persigny. Clever, profound, and penetrating, of an energetic and daring spirit, full of expedients, with a chivalrous heart, M. de Persigny had the head to conceive, and the hand to execute—at once the intelligence and the actor in the enterprise he undertook. Instinctively a diplomatist, he connected the links of a plot with consummate ability, and so as to remain master of the direction he should think proper to give to it. Cool and resolute in danger, no obstacle could daunt or dissuade him. Foresight to combine all contingencies, audacity that fears nothing,—such was M. de Persigny. Since that time, doubtless, the possession of power has modified these qualities. I take men, not as they might be apart from the events I narrate, but such as they appeared at the time of these events. Other subaltern actors were clustered around their principals. The Commander Parquin deserves to be mentioned—a military type of the imperial epoch, resolute, decided, abrupt; an old soldier, who idolised his colours, and who believed the Empire

eternal because the Emperor was immortal. Lieutenant Laity, a young officer, full of earnest enthusiasm, who had imbibed at the Polytechnic School republican principles, and whose democratic longings were mixed up with the glories attached to the name of Napoleon. The Count de Gricour, M. de Quérelles, and M. de Bruc, all half-pay officers, who ventured their lives on the stake, to open to themselves a new career; and lastly, a young and handsome woman, Mrs. Gordon, for whom these adventures had all the charm of romance.

XIV.

Strasbourg and Boulogne! Two names that make the hand tremble, and the conscience shudder; two acts that cannot be weighed with equity, and judged with impartiality, save by infallible history. Is it greatness or folly? Is it virtue or crime? Is it self-denial or ambition? Is it heroism or caprice? Is it foresight or madness? Public opinion, the world, law, and eternal rectitude, answer on one side: fortune, destiny, reality, answer on the other. Here is a man who has twice conspired against an established government, and who, after a lapse of four years, has raised the standard of revolt and civil war upon the frontier and shores of his country—this man seeks to become Emperor. He enters on the continent, he disembarks on the shore as Pretender; he causes treasons and provokes rebellion; he engages in a hopeless struggle, and falls at once by the defenceless state of his own cause. He is insulted—judged—condemned; almost forgotten in America and in the dungeon of Ham. Then, for fifteen years more, he is considered as a maniac rather than a hero. And yet this is

the very man who, some years later, becomes first the favourite of the people, and then the chosen of the nation. Scarcely has his name been breathed in public places before it passes from lip to lip, as a dear remembrance, as a hope for the future... A murmur runs along the streets; passes the gates; spreads over the country; it is echoed far and wide among the humble villages of the land... It swells like the waves of the ocean, till it takes the form of a great popular opinion, and speaks by the voice of six millions of votes, given without motive, without calculation, and as if by an irresistible and spontaneous impulse of the nation. "True 'tis strange—strange 'tis true." Strasbourg and Boulogne were the causes of the election of 10th December. Had not Louis Napoleon Bonaparte put himself forward as Pretender for the Empire, he would probably never have become President of the French Republic. Is it a matter of doubt? Here is a fact which will dissipate all uncertainty on this head. The Bonaparte family did not await a signal from the prisoner of Ham to appear in France, upon the stage of the new Republic. The very day after the revolution, two young men of this family hastened to take their part in the victory. One, the son of Lucien, a republican like his father, uniting the Corsican intrepidity to a patriotism almost Roman; the other, the son of Jerome, active, young, intelligent, clever, reminding one of his uncle in his features—the living image of that historical countenance which is engraven on more hearts than medals. Who, then, cared to recognise these representatives—these heirs—of an heroic epoch, in the midst of the storms, agitations, and convulsions of the revolutionary crisis? What recollection went back to them? What hopes were founded on their names? What promise was

there imprinted on their brows? They passed by, unknown and unnoticed by the people, from whom nothing escapes, and who see everything. They mounted guard merely as patriotic volunteers at the door of the provisional government. They were elected by Corsica, and arrived to take their seats as representatives, without awakening a single transport, or one presentiment. They had not appeared either at Boulogne or Strasbourg! Let reason humiliate herself before such a result. Yes, let reason humiliate herself, but let conscience reserve all her empire. Fortune, fate, the caprice of the populace, the chance, the accident of events, can complete nothing. But the designs of God must be accomplished. The mystery that surrounds the means is the secret of his omnipotence. That which appears senseless or culpable is often, in the designs of Providence, but a method to overrule human reason by defeating all its calculations. The Empire had fallen twice in a few days, under the attack of a million of men, headed by the Kings of Europe. The Emperor, hurled from a power the most universal and the most glorious which ever devolved on man, seemed to have borne away with him to a rock in the midst of the ocean all the hopes of his race. One might have believed that nothing ought to remain of this epoch, save a sublime epic poem.

Betrayed by those whom he had raised; humbled and martyrized by those he had vanquished; without country, without family; delivered into the custody of an agent of the British government, he died at St. Helena, without his last agony causing any pang, or his last sigh being even noticed by the world. His son, whose cradle was surrounded by so many expectations, so many hopes, died almost before he began to

live; he died, in the Palace of Schœnbrünn, a soldier of Austria, after having been the heir of the conqueror of kings and the dictator of nations! Who would believe that this double blow could leave a chance for the Empire? Who could believe that a new shoot was about to spring up, to quicken again its vital principle and its force, after the trunk had been uprooted along with the branch sprang from its bark. Notwithstanding, a young man, whom no one knows, appears. He attempts enterprises, the success of which are, to say the least, impossible. He is scoffed at, tried, sentenced, and imprisoned, then forgotten; and this man who had entered Strasbourg and landed at Boulogne; this man, whom we ourselves have beheld seated between two gendarmes on the bench of the accused, dragged from a prison like a criminal, to become a fugitive and a wanderer; is Louis Napoleon Bonaparte. Oh, Providence! who can deny that you govern the world, and who could doubt, in presence of these lessons, given by your hand, that great trials nobly endured are the apprenticeship of great destinies gloriously fulfilled?

XV.

Now, what did Louis Napoleon intend by his enterprises of Strasbourg and Boulogne? Did he simply come to overturn a government and take its place? Did he come, like Charles Edward, at the head of his partisans, to stake his right and his sceptre on the chances of a battle? Did he come to decide, hand to hand, a party contest in a final duel on the banks of the Rhine and on the sea-shore? No; this Bonaparte was not a conspirator of an ordinary kind. If you will have my frank

opinion, I will not hesitate to add, that his character, his habits, his ideas, his education, his nature, must have deeply revolted from projects of conspiracy. That which proves this assertion is the rashness itself of these acts, and the absolute impossibility of success, which is evident in the simplest examination of the combinations on which the two expeditions of Strasbourg and Boulogne depended. In fact, the hero of these enterprises did not give himself the trouble of ascertaining whether he had any partisans in France. He prepares nothing; he organises nothing. His plans are not warranted by any strategy. His efforts are connected with no secret understandings. He can reckon only on a few inferior officers, who tender their swords and their allegiance. It is not on Paris, the centre of the territory, that he brings his action to bear, to ramify afterwards the whole of France. No; he appears suddenly, like his uncle, in a corner of the territory, and he believes his march will be one long, victorious, and popular procession. A few proclamations, a Constitution—such are his implements of war: his name—his prestige! A dozen friends, who consent to share his fate, constitute his army. It has been said, I know, that the enterprise of Strasbourg, in particular, was connected with a formidable organisation, which encircled all the frontier towns of the East, their populations, and their garrisons. It has been said, also, that several general officers only awaited a first success to pronounce themselves in his favour, and risk their fortunes in a cause in which they recognised the remembrances and enthusiasm of their youth. The judicial proceedings, so searching and complete, which took place before the magistrates and the Chamber of Peers,—the debates that shed light on all the particulars and all the intricacies of this conspiracy,—have not

shown a single indication of this pretended confederacy. I have seen and read everything thereunto relating. Time, which has changed the tide of events, and has converted into a title of favour that which was then a cause of degradation, has proved none of those covert treasons, that hide themselves in the hour of defeat, and which, without a blush, raise their heads in the day of triumph to claim or receive their reward. An old soldier of the Empire, whose heart might have been seduced, but whose conscience could not be moved, had received direct overtures from the Prince. He repulsed them with the inflexibility of duty, and with the grief which he felt for the signal defeat he anticipated for a name he revered. Bonaparte, having become President of the Republic, has not remembered this refusal; or, more strictly speaking, he has remembered it, and he has given the staff of Marshal of France to him who, sacrificing the devotion of his feelings to his oath of allegiance, nobly refused to yield up to him his honour and his sword. Thus Bonaparte did not conspire; for conspiracy implies action and organisation, and neither seriously existed at Strasbourg nor Boulogne. It was not the defection of a few officers, or the devotedness of a few friends, that could secure to him means sufficiently material and powerful to impose himself on a nation. In his mind he counted only on moral force. It was a revolution of opinion that he came to excite, in showing himself unexpectedly on the frontier with a standard and an eagle. This clearly results from a conversation, curious and authentic, that he had, some days previous to his first attempt, with Colonel Vaudrey, at an hotel in Baden. "If the government," said he at that time, "has committed enough faults to render a revolution desirable to the people; if the cause of the Napoleon family

has left recollections engraven deeply enough in French hearts; it will be enough for me to show myself alone to the soldiers, and to recall to them their recent wrongs and their past glories, to gain them over to my standard. Should I succeed in making one regiment follow me; if the soldiers who do not know me personally take fire at the sight of the imperial eagle; then all the chances are in my favour. My cause will have triumphed in spite of any accidental obstacle which may arise to impede it."

To obey destiny; to follow his star; to sound France with the sword of Napoleon; to bring to light what feelings of affection it contained for the name of Bonaparte and the Empire; to call upon the people to declare its will upon the system which, as he believed, engrossed all their favour and enthusiasm; this was most sincerely and impartially what Louis Napoleon Bonaparte had faith in, and endeavoured to bring about in entering sword in hand into Strasbourg, the 30th October, 1836, as in disembarking at Boulogne, the 6th August, 1840.

XVI.

Let us sum up. He quits Arenemberg, 25th October, 1836; he leaves his mother without pain or regret, and maternal affection, so quick-sighted in matters of the heart, suspects absolutely nothing at his departure. He arrives unexcited and indifferent at Strasbourg, in a carriage drawn by four horses. He sleeps calmly and tranquilly during the night, without fear or remorse. At six o'clock in the morning he gets up, and goes out to meet Colonel Vaudrey at the barracks of Austerlitz, absolutely as if he were going to a review. He speaks to the soldiers as if he

arrived from Egypt. He proposes to General Voirol, who commanded in Strasbourg to dedicate to him his sword, just as he would now propose to a general, on half-pay, to take active service. He is repulsed in the quarter of the town called *Finckmatt*, and surrenders without a struggle, without resistance, without a protest. The grave responsibility of his act does not weigh upon him. He feels it not. The future penalty does not appal him a moment. "I am your prisoner," he cried; "so much the better, I shall not die in exile!"

Put into close custody, sent to Paris, and transported to America, he continues perfectly calm, and unmoved in his superstition. His star brings him back to Boulogne. There, again, he evinces the same apparent disregard of all calculation, and preparation of means proportioned to the gigantic results contemplated. Some few friends, as devoted as those at Strasbourg—nearly, in fact, the same, with the addition of a few more, eager, vehement, and courageous,—such as, M. Bataille, M. Conneau, M. Aladenise, M. Ornano, M. Forestier, M. Voisin, M. Mesonnan, M. de Laborde, M. de Montauban, M. Bacciocchi, M. Lombard, having at their head General Montholon,—formed his escort. Success was impossible. What did it signify? Louis Napoleon Bonaparte disembarks in a boat at the dawn of day. MM. Bataille and Aladenise receive him. They make such arrangements as they can, they march, they fail, they fly; they throw themselves into the sea, and swim for safety. The Empire is engulphed. It is brought back, not to be consecrated, but to be degraded. The prisoner stands his trial, and is condemned. The prison of Ham is shut and barred upon him; yet he does not distrust his fortunes, and scarcely has he entered this gloomy dungeon, before an expression escapes him that betrays neither regret nor re-

morse, nor even a murmur: "Here I am in my place," he exclaimed. This is the man: this is the whole drama of his life!

XVII.

It is impossible not to recall here the memorable words which M. Berryer delivered at the bar of the Chamber of Peers, in the course of his vindication of his illustrious client. M. Berryer well knew this all-powerful court. When but a simple advocate he had the honour of defending at its bar Marshal Ney, with M. Dupin as his junior counsel. The great advocate had become the great orator, and his voice which had been raised in favour of one of the greatest heroes of the day, twenty-five years previously, was now heard, in the same Chamber, defending the nephew of the Emperor, and pleading in extenuation of those audacious enterprises which his name had imposed upon his spirit as a duty. M. Berryer became sublime as he probed the consciences of his judges; he penetrated even into the innermost recesses of their souls with this keen and cutting inquiry: "What would you have done had my client succeeded? And here," he cried, "I do not believe that the right, in the name of which this project was attempted, can succumb to the disdain of the attorney-general. You allude to the deficient means, the poverty of the enterprise, to the ridiculous hope of success: well, if success is everything, you who are men, you who are the first subjects of the realm, members of the great political body—to you I say, there is an inevitable arbiter between every judge and every prisoner. Before you decide in the face of this arbiter and of the country, who will hear your verdict, say to yourselves,—without regard to the deficient means,

the right, the laws, the Constitution, laying your hand on your conscience, in the presence of your God, in ours, who know you well,—can you say: 'Had this man succeeded, had he triumphed, I would have denied his claim, I would have refused all participation in his power; I would have disavowed, I would have repudiated it?' As for me, I accept this awful arbitration, and whoever among you, before God, before his country, shall say to me: 'If he had succeeded I would have denied this right,' that man do I acknowledge as my judge!" The culprit in the Chamber of Peers felt the grandeur of this defence, and by it he measured the greatness of his gratitude. It was difficult to thank the advocate without offending the orator, and embarrassing the leader of a party. It was difficult to speak of the future to a man who had invested faith, hope, mind, and heart in the traditional claims of the past. Louis Napoleon Bonaparte wrote to M. Berryer a letter, in which all these delicate points were avoided with equal felicity and skill. This letter I may publish without scruple, because it reflects credit at once on the advocate and his client.

"Paris.

"My dear M. Berryer,—I cannot leave my prison in Paris without reiterating my very best thanks to you, for the great services you have rendered me during my trial. From the moment I knew I was to be brought before the Chamber of Peers, I thought of asking you to undertake my defence, because I knew that the independence of your character placed you above the narrow feelings of party, and whilst your heart was open to misfortune, your mind could comprehend great thoughts, and sympathise with noble feelings. I chose you,

therefore, from esteem; now I take leave of you with gratitude and affection. I know not what fortune may have in store for me. I know not if ever it may be in my power to prove to you my gratitude. *I know not if ever you would consent to accept these proofs;* but whatever may be our relative positions, laying aside politics and their lamentable obligations, we may still be permitted to entertain at all times a mutual esteem and friendship for each other; and I own that if my trial produces no other result than the acquirement of your friendship I shall consider it a great benefit, and will not complain.

"Adieu, my dear M. Berryer; accept this assurance of my profound esteem and gratitude.

"LOUIS NAPOLEON BONAPARTE."

XVIII.

Another political character, equally celebrated, M. de Cormenin had a part to perform, less brilliant than that of M. Berryer, but a curious one, to be now brought to light. M. de Cormenin was one of the heads of the liberal and democratic school; often, however, he remembered the Empire with pride, and he retained for that great epoch a predilection which revealed itself occasionally in his writings. The Empire represented, in his eyes, the principle of authority derived from the sovereignty of the people. M. de Cormenin approved of a strong government as much as he loved liberty. Endowed with a dogmatic intelligence, he went straight to the source of things, and spurning the strange revolutions of the age, he continued faithful to the last to the logic of his principles. M. de Cormenin sent to the Prince Louis Napoleon a rough

outline of his defence. He took this occasion to treat the question after his own original manner of thinking, on the principle, the obligation, and the effects of the sovereignty of the people, and of Universal Suffrage, of which he has never ceased to be, from 1830 up to this time, the most persevering and brilliant advocate. Here is a quotation which nobody has yet seen:

"Power proceeds from the people, who alone are the sovereign; none other can be lawful. That which belongs to the people, the people can give; that which is so given, can be so recalled. Whether we be emperors, kings, magistrates, generals, or legislators, we can be but the servants or the delegates of the people.

"I came not to restrain, but to respect the people. I came to break the oppression of silence, and to open the way with my sword for the sovereignty of the nation. I have failed. Chance gives success; principle constitutes the right. Do but count the votes; I have got three million two thousand five hundred, and you have but two hundred and forty-nine. Do but weigh them; mine emanate from the people, and yours from an assembly without constitutional powers, without a special mission, and without ratification.

"If you say that the Emperor Napoleon was legitimate, he was so only by the Constitutions of the Empire. How then happens it, that I, his heir, am not so by the very same Constitutions? If the people have been pleased to change the Constitutions of the Empire, where is the act of the popular will? If this is not done, and the power exists to do it (I do not deny it), that is why the people ought to be consulted, in order to learn from them what is their will. In that case, we ought not to be at war, but in a state of truce.

It belongs to the people, I allow, to choose either you or me, or to repudiate us both. On my side, I will offer them my name, and a heart as proud as that name. On your side, what can you produce? The people will choose. May its will be done! You have forcibly denied me the use of the soil and the sun of my native country. I came, with my noble companions, forcibly to take back the rights of a man and of a citizen. You have prostrated my body, but you have not—you cannot destroy my right. You have outlawed me: how can your law judge me? An exile, I address myself to Frenchmen. A prisoner, I refuse to acknowledge you as my lawful judges, as you are not the people, nor the people's delegates. Though conquered, I am not amenable to your judgments, nor am I your prisoner. Emperor or citizen, I would have shed the last drop of my blood on the field of battle for the glories and liberties of the French people. Persecuted, condemned, exiled, I act as becomes my name, my right, my honour; and will maintain to the last the courage which befits my reverses."

XIX.

A prison in France; such was the result of these rash and chimerical enterprises: such was the end of these imperial dreams! The new prisoner accepted his position with dignity; not a complaint escaped him; he seemed to follow his destiny wherever it led him. The dungeon of Ham, far from appalling or saddening him, appeared to him as a fatality of his life, and perhaps a halting place in the march of his fortunes. It was a scene decoration that rose up, at a given hour, and at the

whistle of the manager, on the stage of living history, and which was to assist in the explanation of the mysterious aggregate of the drama in which he was the hero. Ham was to him a resting place on the road to the Elysée. The interior of the prison, like its exterior, was gloomy and silent. The Prince Louis Napoleon resided inside the fortress, with a faithful friend, devoted to his adversity, Dr. Conneau, who is at the present hour the sincere and disinterested friend of his prosperity. Dr. Conneau is gifted with one of those lofty and refined natures which science quickens and enlarges instead of withering them; he had attached himself to this cause, without selfish views, without arrogant claims, without any personal feeling, by choice only, by inclination, and mental sympathy;—he watched night and day, over the son of Queen Hortense, with all that solicitude so assiduously tender which the heart alone can inspire, and which is rather a feeling than a duty. He was more than a companion in captivity, more than a medical attendant—he was a friend. He it was who subsequently prepared, and assisted to execute, the plan of escape which was crowned with such signal success. Summoned to trial for this noble fault, he was acquitted, because he was absolved by the consciences and the hearts of his judges the moment he appeared in court

XX.

Nothing will make us better acquainted with the prison of Ham than the echoes which, at distant intervals, have resounded therefrom. Louis Napoleon Bonaparte had a few friends abroad, with whom he corresponded by letter. Having free access to some of these, I have made one or two extracts, which will serve better than anything else to characterise the

man. Here is a letter that commences like an elegy; but the plaintive is soon merged in the stoic style.

"Ham, 14th August, 1841.

"My time is passed here in a very monotonous manner, for the rigours of authority are always the same; however, I cannot say that I suffer from *ennui*, because I have marked out regular occupations for myself which interest me. I write reflections on the History of England, and I have, moreover, cultivated a little garden in a corner of my prison; but all this fills up the time without filling up the heart, which I sometimes find very destitute of feelings. I am much gratified at what you tell me of the good opinions entertained of me in England since my departure, but I do not partake of your hope that I may soon be enabled to revisit that country; and, in spite of the happiness I should feel in being there, I by no means complain of the position I have made for myself; I resign myself to it completely.

"Louis Napoleon Bonaparte."

Always the same sentiment of resignation and the same calmness of conscience; "I by no means complain," says he; in fact, such is his faith in his destiny, that, prisoner at Ham, he glories in his fate, even at the moment fate betrays him. "Here I am in my place," wrote he, to a woman whose heart pitied his misfortunes. What serenity of mind! Scarcely can you detect at times the sense of his captivity, even in the confidential disclosures of his soul. He had just read in a work by M. Saintine the private annals of a prisoner: this recalled him to his own situation. Far from troubling his mind, it

increased his calmness and stoicism, as we may judge from the following:—

"Ham, 22nd May, 1841.

"I have read the book, '*Picciola*,' of which you speak, and I was enchanted with the style, so simple and elegant, and so different from the publications of the present day. Literature, in fact, is but the voice of society, and when society is affected with convulsions and sufferings her voice ought also to be affected. I am, however, happier than the imprisoned hero of the author of '*Picciola*,' and my flowers are religiously respected. I could even now gather a nosegay worthy of the garden of Lady ——. There may be a little boasting in this, but I view my plants with paternal eyes.

"Louis Napoleon Bonaparte."

Time was passing on, and the weight of years was accumulating upon this destiny. It is in vain for the spirit to be strong; it cannot resist the wearisome uniformity which stifles it. There is in the firmest character a terminating point for its courage and endurance. The heart is a reservoir which is soon emptied, unless active life renews its joys, its excitements, its desires, its hopes, or its illusions. After five years of solitude, inaction of mind and body, of sunless days, and uneasy repose, Louis Napoleon Bonaparte at length suffers a murmur to escape him. He exists but for study. The future for him exhibits no horizon, no light. "I am stifled," he cries. Let us listen to him:—

"Ham, 26th January, 1845.

"Years roll on in hopeless uniformity, and it is only in my heart and in my conscience that I find the power to resist, in

this atmosphere of lead which envelopes and stifles me. However, the hope of a brighter futurity does not abandon me, and I trust one day to see you again, and renew in person, with my thanks for your continued friendship, the assurance of my affectionate and respectful attachment.

"LOUIS NAPOLEON BONAPARTE."

XXI.

On the 26th May, 1846, a man of marked features, with a clouded and melancholy brow, with a deep and thoughtful look, with a stiff gait, dressed like a labourer, carrying a board on his back, descended the staircase of the fortress, crossed the prison-yard with a steady step, passed through the ranks of the soldiery, went by the sentinels, and in an instant reached the country adjacent to Saint-Quentin. This man was Louis Napoleon Bonaparte, the nephew of the Emperor, the future President of the French Republic.

On the 24th February, 1848, another personage escaped clandestinely, not from a prison, but from a palace, and entered a hackney-coach on the Place de la Revolution, on the spot where Louis XVI. had perished on the scaffold: he hurried away a fugitive, a wanderer, in a disguise not much unlike that put on by the prisoner of Ham, to find a small vessel to carry him to England. This man was Louis-Philippe d'Orléans, King of the French.

What a mockery of fortune! What a caprice of destiny; or, to speak more correctly, what a lesson from above! Let us bow down our heads and humble ourselves in the dust! Let us acknowledge that the acts of Providence are something more than mere chance! How can we help acknowledging this

mysterious and providential conjunction of causes and effects, which proves the eternal reign of right and justice, even in the most unexpected accidents, and revolutions the least foreseen? These events, that roll on in rapid and confused succession, astonish the mind and baffle human reason; but, on minute investigation, we trace the eternal plan of civilisation, of liberty, and progress. It is the hand of God that rivets the armour: the hand of time can never break it.

XXII.

None, except Dr. Conneau and the *valet-de-chambre* of the Prince, were cognisant of the Prince's intention to escape. The evening before, the Prince had visited General Montholon in his room,—an old family friend, the companion of his evil fortune, he was partaking his punishment, after having devoted himself to his rashness. He had embraced him affectionately, and the Countess de Montholon likewise, a generous and noble volunteer in the captivity of her husband, who reminded one of another heroine, a former prisoner, the Princess de Polignac. Such outward marks of affection were not habitual to Louis Napoleon Bonaparte. General Montholon and his wife observed it; they conceived a vague suspicion; the next day they learned that the prisoner of Ham had escaped, passed the French frontier, and embarked for England, *viâ* Belgium. The character I am now examining declares itself again in an extremely curious letter which has been confided to me. Having escaped from Ham and found refuge in England, Louis Napoleon does not look upon himself as a fugitive, but as a pretender who lays down his arms. He offers *peace* to the French

government, and declares that his intention is not to renew the *war*. Thus does he explain his views, when addressing M. de Saint-Aulaire, at that time ambassador in London.

"London, 19th March, 1846.

"M. le Comte,—I hasten to declare, with frankness, to one who was the friend of my mother, that in quitting my prison I have no design to renew a war against the French government which has been disastrous to me, but my sole object is to be free, to attend on my aged father.

"Before coming to this determination, I used all my efforts obtain from government, permission to go to Florence, and I offered all the guarantees my honour permitted me to give; but, at last, seeing that my attempts were fruitless, I had recourse to those desperate measures which already, under Henry IV., the Duke of Nemours and the Duke of Guise had employed in similar circumstances.

"I beg you, M. le Comte, to inform the French government of my pacific intentions, and I trust that this assurance, freely given on my own part, may hasten the deliverance of the friends I have left in prison.

"Louis Napoleon Bonaparte."

XXIII.

As I have quoted from the unpublished correspondence of the prisoner of Ham, I wish to make known an admirable page, of a date prior to those I have already published, but which has no need of novelty to render it acceptable, or to enhance the nobility of the sentiments it expresses. This letter is addressed,

from New York, to Colonel Vaudrey, after the expedition to Strasbourg, in which that officer took so active a part. It is admirable, from its good faith and stoicism. Hitherto, it has been considered private and confidential, now it is necessary only to publish it to render it historical.

"New York, 15th April, 1837.

"My dear Colonel,—You cannot imagine how happy it made me, on my arrival in the United States, to hear of your acquittal; for four months and a half, I was incessantly harrassed with fears as to your fate. From the moment of my imprisonment up to my departure from France, I never ceased to do all in my power to soften the condition of my companions in misfortune, always taking care, whilst making intercessions in their favour, not to do anything to compromise, as you will readily believe, the dignity of the name I bear. Before embarking, I wrote to you, under cover to the Attorney-General Rossé; he did not deliver it to you, because it might have been useful to you in your defence. How infamous! As for me, they took care to send me on my travels, to hinder me from having any communication with you before your trial was over; but I do not complain; I was on board a French ship, which is a kind of fatherland afloat. How unaccountable are human feelings. During my unfortunate enterprise my tears betrayed my grief but twice; first when, hurried far away from you, I knew I was not to be put on my trial, and the second time when I was leaving the frigate, and was about to be set at liberty. The letter you wrote me gave me great pleasure. I am happy to think that all your sufferings have not altered the friendship you bear me, and which I value so highly. For two months I

sailed between the tropics, under the wind of St. Helena. Alas! I could not view the historical rock; but it appeared to me then, that the breezes wafted to me these last words of the expiring Emperor to the companions of his adversity. 'I have sanctioned all the principles of the revolution. I have infused them into the laws, into my acts; there is not one I have not consecrated; circumstances, unfortunately, were too pressing. France judges me with indulgence, she gives me credit for my intentions, she cherishes my name, my victories. Imitate her, *be faithful to the opinions which we have supported*, to the glory we have acquired; without this, all is shame and confusion!'

"These admirable words, Colonel, you have well understood. Here I am in America, far from all that is dear to me. I know not yet what I shall do, or how long I shall stay here. At all events, Colonel, and in whatever country I may be, you will always find in me a friend on whom you can rely, and who will be proud to give you the proofs of his feelings towards you.

"Adieu, Colonel; continue to serve France. As for me, nothing more remains but to pray for her welfare. Adieu; do not forget me.

"Your friend,

"NAPOLEON LOUIS BONAPARTE."

"P.S. I have no occasion to clear myself in your eyes of the calumnies heaped upon me. They could not make me sign any engagement, as all I asked was to be left peaceably in prison; besides, they did not endeavour to do so. They accuse me of having *intrigued*. But M. Thiers will defend me, who has said (vol. ii., p. 119, "*L'Histoire de la Révolution*"),

'All parties, when compelled to act in the dark, are reduced to expedients which are called intrigues when unsuccessful.' Some accuse my enterprise, but M. Thiers will defend me; he who in speaking of the funereal honours rendered to the remains of Marat, expresses himself thus:—'And if history recalls such scenes, it is to teach men to reflect on the effect of casual and fleeting prepossessions, to urge them to examine themselves closely, when they mourn for the powerful or curse the defeated of the day' (vol. v., p. 87, 4th edition of "*L'Histoire de la Révolution*"). When the future flies before us, it is in the past we must seek for consolation. Adieu! adieu!"

XXIV.

Formerly, ambitious men prepared themselves for government by force of arms; now, they prepare themselves by study and reflection. A good book is a better title than a glorious battle, and it is more important for the future governor of a people to think well than to fight well.

Louis Napoleon Bonaparte is a remarkable writer. His meditative mind, his correct judgment, the independence of his thoughts, the inflexibility of his convictions, his taste for all that is noble, generous, and great, are traceable in all his writings. He is less of an artist than a poet, less a philosopher than an observer and sound thinker. With him, the force of style is but the force of thought. He does not paint, he engraves. He writes as he acts. The exact word, in its truest sense, is always at his command to convey the exact idea he wishes to express. His works have no glitter or dazzle, but they abound in sentences as concise as axioms, and in conclusions as simple and practical as maxims. Already, before the

affairs of Strasbourg and Boulogne, Louis Napoleon Bonaparte had published several works, which announced a serious and elevated genius. "*Les Reveries Politiques*," and "*Les Etudes sur la Constitution Suisse*," fixed public attention on him; but it was, above all, in two important publications that he revealed real talent, and acquirements of a serious order; one of these publications, entitled "*Les Idées Napoléoniennes*," was, in some way, a sort of manifesto between his two attempts, as if to excuse the one, and prepare the other. "*L'Histoire de l'Artillerie*" is a technical work, which is considered by competent men as one of the most complete treatises ever written on this subject. Louis Napoleon has also written a "*Fragment sur l'Histoire d'Angleterre*," an "*Etude sur l'Extinction du Paupérisme*," another "*Sur l'Impôt des Sucres*," and many detached articles upon current political questions. Two sentiments are seen to predominate in these different works,—faith in democracy, and an enthusiastic confidence in the Empire. In the eyes of his nephew, the Emperor is not a man, but a people; thus he regards that formidable concentration of power which he acquired, and settled on the firm basis of authority, as the power of a people passed into a man. From this point of view, not only does he find nothing to blame in his uncle, but everything to glorify. His battles, his conquests, his institutions, his administrative centralisation, his dictatorship over the human mind, all appear to him irreproachable and morally just. It is not that he considers that all this is possible again, and that the sovereignty of right ought to be absorbed in force and glory. No! that which he seeks in his works is an Imperial Republic, with Universal Suffrage for its base, and hereditary succession for its dome. In him the Empire appears rather an institution than a claim. He does not place his dynastic

right above popular rights. At the same time he avails himself of his name as of a title of nobility, and he puts all his force, faith, hope, and legitimacy in Universal Suffrage.

Up to this moment there is nothing in the conduct of Louis Napoleon which is in contradiction with the general spirit of his writings. He has invariably professed the most profound respect for the national will. President or Emperor, he will never be more than the representative of the sovereignty of the people. If the dynasty of the Bonapartes be founded, it will be the dynasty of Universal Suffrage.

Louis Napoleon has also written largely upon political economy. He has profoundly studied the conditions of the moral and physical improvement of the poorer classes. Property, industry, state allowances, and encouragement in every form, public credit, and free-trade, have each in turn been the objects of his investigation. There are some errors joined to many truths in the pages he has dedicated to these important subjects. The experience of the statesman will rectify, doubtless, anything that may appear exaggerated in the first flights of the reformer. The writer was at liberty to point out anything he considered necessary, but the head of the government will attempt that only which is practicable. In politics, as in all things, the possible is always the limit of progress. Louis Napoleon no longer employs himself in writing books, but in legislating for the country. He dictates messages, and pronounces official discourses. With him, these are not merely idle and spiritless matters. Formerly, when the head of the government made a speech, his chief desire was to say nothing. Reserve was pushed to a point, that it degenerated into a display of mere words The more unmeaning a speech was, the

more clever and appropriate it appeared. Now, this is changed; every time Louis Napoleon has spoken he has not feared to address himself boldly to public opinion. His messages and his discourses are master pieces of tact, moderation, and truth. No responsible minister, however eloquent, would have succeeded so well in defining the different situations which he is so often called upon to explain. It is clearly perceptible, that the firm hand that wields the pen, likewise directs the rudder of the state.

XXV.

After his escape from the prison of Ham, the Prince Louis Napoleon had proceeded to England. It was in that country, whose manners and customs he admired, that he awaited with quiet patience and confident anticipation the return of his destinies. Captivity had neither changed himself, nor altered the strength of his mind, or the goodness of his heart. He came from this painful trial such as he was, without personal enmities, without rancour; never accusing men, nor ever doubting Providence.

This attitude of Louis Napoleon was neither affected nor strange. In showing himself thus, he showed himself naturally. Such as he was in England he had been in the solitudes of Arenemberg, in the perils of Strasbourg, in America, at Boulogne, upon his trial in the Chamber of Peers, and in the prison of Ham. His firm trust in his destiny had never for a moment left him. A few days after his arrival in England he went to see his cousin, Lady Douglas, daughter of the Grand Duchess of Baden. "At last, you are free," said the young Princess to him; "will you now be quiet? Will you lay aside

those fallacies which have cost you so dear, and the cruel delusions of those dreams which have brought such misery on those who love you?" "My dear cousin," replied the late prisoner of Ham, "I do not belong to myself; I belong to my name and to my country. It is because my fortune has twice betrayed me that my destiny is nearer its accomplishment. I bide my time." This was ludicrous enough. The star of Louis Napoleon was veiled from all eyes, even from those of his relations who best loved him; he, alone, saw and followed it.

The news of the Revolution of February arrived. The name of Bonaparte was never mentioned in that Revolution, unless with the taunts and obloquy of exile. "Down with Bonapartism!" cried the Provisional Government, in one of its proclamations at the Hôtel de Ville. Louis Napoleon saw, at once, the tendency and result of this great agitation. On learning the dethronement of Louis-Philippe, he said to his cousin, Lady Douglas, "Before the year is out, I shall direct the government of France."

On the 10th of December, 1848, this prediction was fulfilled. On that day the Constituent Assembly, which endeavoured to exclude Louis Napoleon Bonaparte, and which had opened its ranks to him only to crush him with disdain, proclaimed him President of the French Republic.

He had entered that Assembly, some months previously, as a simple member, suspected by all, misunderstood by all; alone, or nearly so, in the midst of parties who repulsed or avoided him, and he went out the head of the Government, with an imposing popular majority, but also with a very evident parliamentary minority.

The election of the 10th December had been unanimous and magnificent, as a spontaneous wish of the people. But the state of affairs it produced was none the less menacing and terrible. Louis Napoleon, carried by his votes to a sort of moral dictatorship, had honestly refused it when taking the oath to the Constitution. Instead of presenting himself as absolute master, on the 20th December, as some urged him to do, he presented himself as the guardian of the Constitution, and he renounced the use of the power he possessed over it, that he might prevail through its own inherent and utter weakness.

The Constitution of 1848 had been combined so as to make the conflict of the two powers it was organizing inevitable. It had treated the executive power with extreme distrust. It had prepared the condemned cell, and the judges were ready. The gates of Vincennes were seen ajar through the flimsy veil meant to disguise its suspicions. An August 10th, or an 18th Brumaire were written in every article, and looked more like the plan of a campaign, than a publication of laws. The President of the Republic could only choose between revolt and slavery. If he revolted, he compromised everything: if he submitted, nothing was left to him. Either of these extremities it was impossible to accept.

At this period, Louis Napoleon had nothing but the power of his name. The army, humbled by the 24th February, in a ferment by the spirit of disorder and relaxed discipline, had not yet recovered, under the command of its chiefs, that feeling of duty which had heretofore signalised it. The soldiers read the newspapers after parade; clubs began to be formed, and to infest the barracks. Corporals, instead of aiming to become sergeants, sought to become legislators. Rattier and Boichot

competed with Marshal Bugeaud for the votes of the electors of the Seine. Thus the elect of the 10th December had everything to do; the army was to be disciplined, authority restored, religion defended, Socialism crushed, revolution restrained, parties overcome, the Assembly mastered, public opinion gained, and France saved; and the Constitution, to which he had sworn, left him powerless.

Immense and glorious task, which no man could have accomplished by the single force of his genius, without the succour of that Providence who presides over the destinies of nations—immortal source of right, justice, and human progress!

XXVI.

Louis Napoleon Bonaparte had gained six millions of votes in his appeal to Universal Suffrage. A whole people rallied to his name, but he had no party to support him in his labours and designs. The Bonapartist party, as yet, was but a latent force among the people. It was to grow up later, along with events as they should marshal themselves propitiously. France loves glory; above all, when it shines from a distance. She had already forgotten how much blood and tears had been shed in those victories which are now but immortal recollections, stamped upon bronze and brass; the unbought titles of French sovereignty over the world. The grief of mothers weeping over their sons buried beneath the snows of Moscow, the barren fields deprived of the hands that fertilised the soil, the burden of military dictatorship, so hard to endure even when synonymous with that of Napoleon,—all this was forgotten by the people. For all of them he still remained the Great Emperor, the hero of a hun

dred battles, hymned by Béranger, and whose coloured portrait on the humblest walls, constitutes the museum of every hut. Louis Napoleon came forth a living legend. This feeling, so deeply impresssed, so true, so simply natural, which, after having been the passion of the preceding generation, is the pride of ours; this feeling reverted to his name, gathered in his person, and caused him to be chosen among all, and before all. Moreover, there was something else in the election of the 10th December: there was a protest against all, that the Revolution of February had produced that which was barren, revolting, and violent; a vague, but irresistible instinct for the principle of authority; a presentiment, as it were, of the power that lay enshrined in old glories. A recollection and an instinct, we say—the recollection went back to the Emperor; the instinct pointed to something great and powerful. A govern ment with the name of Bonaparte, even as yet without the Empire; such was the 10th December.

To sum up, Louis Napoleon Bonaparte attained power solely by the strength of his name. He was soon to show himself in his own character as a man of power.

XXVII.

One question presents itself before all others. I will meet it frankly, and answer it seriously. Was Louis Napoleon Bonaparte sincere when he took the oath to the Constitution of 1848? Yes, he was sincere; all his words and acts prove that he was. Without doubt, he found the Constitution bad. He accepted it as he found it. He did not approve it. He reserved to himself, hereafter, the right of modifying it. He

counted on the lessons of experience; on the patriotism and good sense of the French people. He found in it, moreover, a superior principle which governed it, and which, if need were, might become the instrument of public safety. This principle was the sovereignty of the people. This sovereignty, of which he was the head and heart, left him the future. He had no occasion to usurp; he had but to invoke the rights of the French nation at the critical hour. To respect the Constitution, to make use of it against faction, to await patiently the hour of its legal amendment, to submit himself to the will of France, and, if need were, to call the will forth, and provide for public safety by an initiative act; this was all that the President of the Republic meditated at the solemn hour in which he took his oath, before men, and before God. Is there anything different in his acts? Let us see.

XXVIII.

Louis Napoleon has closely studied Italian policy; there is something of the Medici about him, with goodness of heart and uprightness of mind to boot. Although his nature contains much original force, and his life is full of adventures, his conduct is always the result of profound and well-considered plans. With him, everything is calculated, not excepting that fearless daring which never calculates. The lines of the tactician are ruled in his head. He arranges and alters them according to circumstances. He takes up and lets down men, at the hour appointed for the conjuncture. He knows whither his steps wend, and he marches with inflexible firmness towards his aim, with a dull eye, but an open and resolute mind. There

existed an absolute incompatibility between the two powers who found themselves face to face after the election of the 10th December. These two powers could live only in hostility, either silent or expressed. The one was the condemnation of the other. Louis Napoleon elevated to the Presidential chair by the immense majority of the nation, the Constituent Assembly fell immediately into a minority. What was the elect of the people to do? The Assembly was the sovereign, even in the scale with him, and could impeach him. Would he, on his part, try to humble and oppress the Assembly? Would he send to the ministerial benches men of opposite principles to his, not to gain them, but to push them to extreme measures? The rock was perilous. Louis Napoleon was able to hold on without slipping. He was able to triumph without struggling. The Constituent Assembly abdicated of its own accord, and this it did after having voted the expedition to Rome. To obtain this result the President had employed a masterly contrivance. He availed himself of the services of a minister who was liberal, moderate, and almost republican, and whom the Republic could neither suspect without insult, nor repulse without injustice. M. Odilon Barrot, who presided over and personified the Cabinet of the 10th December, seemed precisely one of the arches of the bridge over which France was to pass from royalty to democracy. Royer-Collard, on one occasion, had called him Pétion. M. Odilon Barrot was more than that. Pétion, hesitating everlastingly between his popularity and his duty, only came to a decision when obliged to choose between dishonour and death. He chose death. M. Odilon Barrot has something in him above the patriotism of the scaffold or death, which is but the

patriotism of parade, enacted for posterity. He has shown, on many occasions, moderation, prudence, and patriotic zeal in moments of public peril. He has this, nor is this the time to forget it.

M. Odilon Barrot satisfied the public mind, and the moderate republicans. His talent and his probity rendered resistance possible against the exclusive republicans of the Constituent Assembly. This majority had the look of an impregnable citadel. Louis Napoleon took good care not to break down the gates. He did better; he obliged the garrison to deliver up the keys to him, and to retreat in all haste into the electoral passes, where it was certain to be crushed. And so it fell out.

XXIX.

The republicans *de la veille* (of yesterday) were broken. The majority of the Legislative Assembly was renewed and changed. The President had gained his object; he had reduced his enemies to a minority in the national representation. He had brought to a successful end the expedition to Rome, offered as a pledge to monarchical Europe and to Catholic France. He had triumphed on the 13th June over an insurrectional attempt, without a drop of blood being shed or a shot fired. M. Ledru-Rollin had gone to join Messrs. Caussidière and Louis Blanc in London, and the Mountain had given way to ridicule, before having launched the thunderbolts of its vengeance. This was certainly a good deal,—was it all?

No! It was only the first step. Louis Napoleon Bonaparte, freed from his enemies, became an object of suspicion to his friends. There are secret plots that it is not yet permitted to ex-

pose. My pen revolts against scandal or accusation. I will not anticipate the hand of time, which alone can draw up the curtain which still conceals certain things, rather suspected than known, and from which we turn our heads away as from revelations that disturb our consciences. It is impossible, however, not to state, that the day following the establishment of the new power, the 29th January, 1849, the position of affairs became very critical. We have only to recall the strange and gloomy appearance of that day! An immense army occupied Paris,—a belt of iron surrounded the national representation. The President came forth from the Elysée about noon, passed along the front ranks of the regiments, like a general at the hour of battle. The legions were at their post. General Changarnier treated with great contempt, at that time, the supremacy of the Constituent Assembly. Every one expected Cæsar, but Cæsar did not come. Louis Napoleon had more integrity and foresight than ambition. Apprised some days before that he had but to stretch out his hand to take the imperial crown from off the point of a sword devoted to him, he energetically refused. To those who pressed him he answered, "No! not yet. My title is sufficient. I can receive no other, unless from the will of France, and the necessity of the public weal."

XXX.

His allies were not his friends. Louis Napoleon knew it well. The danger he apprehended was not to be vanquished, but to be played off. The message of the 31st October, which, at that time, astonished most minds, was, in reality, the unforeseen and energetic sally of a general besieged by covert and concealed enemies.

One day, in the month of August, if I remember well, Count Molé came triumphantly to announce, at a solemn meeting of the Council of State, that the fusion of the two royal families was accomplished; and M. Molé was one of the privy councillors of Louis Napoleon! and those who received his communication were the advisers of his government! Thus Louis Napoleon was already, in the eyes of the majority, a mere sentinel, whose duty it was to guard his post until fresh ones came to take it from him; a Monk, twice a traitor to his country first, and then to himself! This was the part, the noble part, that was intended for the elect of the 10th December,—for the heir of the Emperor Napoleon!

XXXI.

But, previous to beginning the contest with Louis Napoleon Bonaparte, it was necessary to deprive him of his vital force, that in which he might, some day, refresh himself for the combat, in identifying himself with the people; in a word, to abolish Universal Suffrage. We know how the law of the 31st May had been got up. I desire neither to extenuate, nor to ascribe to the wrong party, the responsibility of this act. Was the law of the 31st May conceived in the councils of the executive, or in the consultations of the legislative power? Was it this or that man who proposed it, or drew it up? A puerile question, indeed, and one I never could find an answer to. It is certain that this law was made against the President; for not only did it suppress one half of those electors who had voted for him once, and would again have done the same, but it shut the door against the revision of the

Constitution, and, consequently, against the constitutional re-election of the President. Whether Louis Napoleon was a free agent, or was forced, the result in this case is the same. This result was, to make the President the prisoner to the majority. M. Thiers,—whose sagacity none can deny,—understood it so. Three millions of electors remained on the field of battle. Contempt was laid over the bodies of the dead, and then on their tombstones people inscribed "Vile multitude!" after which, as much self-satisfaction was expressed as Charles V. might have shown, returning from the battle of Pavia, and leading Francis I. a prisoner to the Escurial. The fatal omen of an ultra-constitutional consequence was written in that law of the 31st May; that law once passed, nothing else could follow but an implacable contest, without mercy on either side, between these two powers. The triumph of one party over the other was inevitable. Thus it was that the majority, led and influenced by M. Thiers, understood and accepted it. Behold, indeed, how the attitude of parties changed from the hour this fatal act was decreed! They believed that Samson was no longer to be feared; Delilah had cut off his hair; and the careless man did not even sleep, for he himself had put the scissors into the hands of the perfidious enchantress. Parties then began to stir, and intrigues to be woven, hopes to revive; private claims are put in; the modest subsidy required by the President had all but sustained the insulting refusal it met with the year after. The intervention of General Changarnier became necessary to prevent the insult of a refusal, by making the grant still more injurious. A few days after, the Assembly prorogued itself. A permanent commission was named; it was purposely composed of names the most avowedly hostile. The

friends of the Count de Chambord, and the partisans of the Count de Paris, are commissioned to watch over the Republic and the Constitution. These gentlemen set out quietly for Wiesbaden and Claremont, to do homage to the royalties they sympathise with; and, on their return, hearing a few soldiers exclaim, "*Vive Napoleon!*" behold they raise the cry of the country is in danger. Secret plots were concocted, and thwarted each other continually. Chimerical terrors issued from some vague and unathorised police. M. Dupin plays the martyr, and persuades himself, with apparent simplicity, that his life is in danger. General Changarnier sees shadows hovering about him armed with daggers. The conspiracy is denounced; the conspirators and their accomplices are named; the guilty participation of the Elysée is evident in these crimes, bred in their own imaginations. They even pretend it is with the money of the President the assassins are paid. The President, they insinuate, is himself one of the band. Everything seems full of dreadful mystery; secret trap-doors, dark designs, homicidal conspiracies: the dark ages have returned.

XXXII.

Louis Napoleon would have lost all, and everything in France would have been in jeopardy, had he not answered these intrigues by the still greater spirit with which he should strike a bold stroke of policy. With a tact which never misses its aim, and a firm will, he faltered not, but broke the sword of General Changarnier. The parliamentary crisis which followed gave evidence of the impotence of parliament. M. Baroche, who sustained with admirable talent the weight of this debate,

against all the efforts of the coalition leaders of the majority, had only found one eloquent voice to sustain him,—it was the voice of Lamartine. He defended his position foot by foot; and, in falling, he obtained a majority in the majority itself. Three hundred votes were given in favour of the Elysée; the rest, belonging to the monarchists, were thrown back, without credit and without honour, upon an alliance with the Mountain. The Assembly, weakened by its own victory, and the vote of "want of confidence," which had been obtained by means of a coalition without principle, without object, and without responsibility, proved only a moral degradation, and clearly pointed to a certain defeat.

The day that the dismissal of General Changarnier was announced to the National Assembly, the leaders of the majority held a hasty meeting, and determined to make one last effort with the President. Messrs. Thiers, De Broglie, Berryer, Montalembert, set out for the Elysée. They were received with that affable and dignified politeness which inspires confidence, without permitting familiarity. Louis Napoleon had to cope with men of influence; he had to sustain the shock of the greatest eloquence, and most undoubted experience, of our times. He listened to all with the most perfect calmness. The eloquent men who were addressing him took up the subject one after the other, in this important interview. They expended all their powers to shake and convince him. They offered peace, they declared war; they pointed to the lessons of the past, the difficulties of the present, the perils of the future; and they alternately made trial of supplications and threats. These torrents of words fell from their lips only to slide along steel. All was useless; nothing was changed. One of the

friends, the most devoted to Louis Napoleon, was waiting, in the next room, with more curiosity than anxiety, the upshot of this visit, the result of which he was prepared for. He had the details from the Prince himself, who thus terminated his recital: "There was no argument, however far-fetched, that they did not bring to play. Only think, one of them went so far as to threaten me with the fate of poor King Charles X.: true, it was he who wished to be my Polignac."

XXXIII.

The law of the 31st May proves itself a new prison of Ham to Louis Napoleon. It is a prison, the key of which is in the hand of General Changarnier. The noble and daring prisoner has not yet been able to escape; but, in dismissing the military chief, who had not hesitated to declare himself the champion of parliamentary usurpation, he has already got rid of a sentinel who barred his passage to the open country of Universal Suffrage. Henceforth, the will can command the deed. Still there remained means of safety to all,—for the President, for the majority, for the Republic, for society: but the President boldly proposed the revocation of the law of the 31st May! Let the majority unite with the minority to grant it. Let the minority join the majority to pass the revision of that law. Let Louis Napoleon—having thereby become re-eligible—be possibly re-elected, without the Constitution being overthrown by the voters, and let the Assembly, instead of compromising all and everything, determine to save all, by seeking support in the immense popularity of a name that ought to be dear, and in the undeniable superiority of the man so worthy of all esteem.

Then everything becomes easy, because nothing is impossible to justice, good sense, and necessity. I know that people expected, with alarm, to see Socialism spring from Universal Suffrage. Socialism threatens us, in fact, from more than one side; and it is impossible to shut one's eyes to the direful consequences of its insane principles, its raging passions, its dismal revenges, its fell despair. But, why is it so full of terrors? For this reason, especially, that a formidable weapon still remains in its hands. Yes, Socialism at this very hour is armed with Universal Suffrage; let us prevent its approach, armed with this usurped right, for who can promise that victory may not be won by means of it? The insurgents of June were not to be feared because they defended their barricades with savage and brutal intrepidity. They had inscribed on their standards, "War against the rich! His rights to the labouring man!" a cry that invokes the grossest fallacies and falsehood. But the insurgents of 1851 wrote on theirs, "Equal rights, and supremacy of the nation!" they borrowed a truth, to use as a label for violence and destruction. Disguised with this false label, sanguinary alarm and frightful anarchy had a greater chance of advancing. Revolution would hide itself under the Republic; and the demagogue would put on the mask of democracy.

Pull off this mask with a bold hand, ye executives and legislative powers. Do not suffer revolution to surprise us in the shape of the Republic, and beware you do not give passage to democracy, whether with or without violence, whether with musket balls or votes, by cunning or by force, in the elections of 1852, by putting on the armour of Universal Suffrage. Is there any difficulty? No! It is sufficient that France should be

reinstated in her rights and liberties, and that she may be able freely, placidly, and without perpetual disquiet, to manifest her national will. From that moment Socialism will be an unreal thing. All the recruits that the disorder of men's minds, the confusion of principles, and the deterioration of character, have furnished to their ranks for three years past, will leave them and return to the cause of civilisation and practical progress.

Elections are made, less by the number of electors than by the current of public opinion. There were only eighty thousand electors when King Charles X. engaged, with a majority of two hundred and twenty-one, the conflict which was to sweep his government to the strand at Cherbourg. A revolution had emerged from the votes of scarcely one-hundredth part of the people, and that class of voters who, by their interests and habits, were necessarily the most anti-revolutionary. Who could have answered for the consequences of an election, after the repeal of the law of the 31st May? Supposing this law to be respected, it is none the less true that a brooding irritation is fomented among the people; that irritation will assuredly appear at the hustings. Disorder and bribery would follow, the minds of the electors would be poisoned, and nothing but hatred, vengeance, and violence, would be the result. Let this law be repealed, and the President and the majority might once more unite and triumph over every danger, and society would be saved.

XXXIV.

But I suffer no illusions to mislead me. In my eyes the revocation of the law of the 31st May, and the revision of the Constitution, are only means, and not results. I point to these

means in order to arrive at the end which appears, to all serious minds, as an imperative necessity for public safety. I sum up this object in one word: establish a government. Let us lay aside, for a moment, these images of civil war; let us trample under foot this threat of insurrection, which the hand of factions holds suspended over 1852, as the punishment of a mutilated Constitution and an outraged Republic; let us admit that everything goes on for the best, according to the interests of those whose hopes or fears are linked to this period as that of their ruin or their deliverance; let us suppose that all these dreaded perils have been prevented. Well! the law has been respected; the electoral urn has not been stained with blood. The President of the Republic has been re-elected, every plot has failed; the two great powers created by the voice of the nation are commencing a new career,—the legislative power has three years before it; the executive, four. Is this all? Will France feel re-assured? Will the Republic be consolidated? Will democracy be regulated? Will Socialism be disarmed? Will government be firmly seated? No; even with all this, with all these results, which go far beyond the anticipations of the most sanguine; even with all these impossibilities, which could only be accomplished through a miracle of God; the country would have done little or nothing for her salvation. The country would have possessed an Assembly hostile to Socialism, a Presidency devoted to order. But would it have a government? What is a government, then? Is it nothing more than a man who acts and executes? Is it nothing more than an assembly which discusses and deliberates? It is something of that kind, certainly, but it is something besides. A government is, above all, a body of institutions based on law, and so

combined as to give pledges to society by justice, by stability, by authority, by harmonious incorporation of all the resources which the country possesses. If these forces are organised in such a manner as, instead of producing harmony, they must necessarily create discord; and if, instead of manifesting public opinion, they misrepresent it; in such case there is no government,—there is but the name of one.

For a country so governed there may doubtless be some hours of relaxation and peace, some empty visions of fortune and greatness; but it has no basis below to support it, it has no space before it to expand in. No! this is neither a government nor a republic. A republic constantly vacillating between usurpation and revolution would be none at all. It would possess only its defects, its instability, its turmoil, its agitation, its restlessness, its exasperation; it would have none of its virtues—I mean, no moral power of opinion, growing into authority, and constituting the inviolable power of the law. What was there to expect from these results, even supposing them gained without struggles, without crisis, in the repose and confidence of the country? At best, we should be enabled to go over again the epoch now drawing to a close. Is France satisfied with the last three years? Does she wish to perpetuate the state of things those years have produced? Does she think nothing better can be done? Those conflicts, incessantly renewed; those intrigues, constructed by ambition, and wearing the false mask of patriotism; those coalitions against the very principle of the constitution, one day leagued with the government to mislead it, another day leagued against it to oppose and overthrow it; those electoral circles, who substitute the tyranny of a coterie for the unbiassed choice of the public spirit; those panics, suspended over

every ballot, when society seems to be playing a game of desperation; those anxieties, which await and anticipate a catastrophe always at hand the next day: in a word, all those troubles which recurred every day during the last three years;—do they prove that the political life of the country is directed and regulated according to the laws of its nature, according to the stimulus of the ideas and customs of which it consists, according to the wants of its civilization and the social necessities on which it must reckon for the power to advance without falling, to innovate without destroying, to preserve without stagnating? Well, even this state of things itself,—which I do not hesitate to declare bad, because it is false, troubled, and one of dissension,—could not return without becoming worse. It would find its forces weakened and perverted; it would find the perils that had already shaken it to its foundation, grown greater and stronger. Amidst this distraction of parties and conflict of powers, will the President, whoever he may be, unite six million of votes like the elect of the 10th December? Will this second election, made under such circumstances, prove as unanimous as the first? Will party spirit pause and be silent, as in 1848, before the common interest society has to resist its ruin? Will a legislative assembly, derived from a limited suffrage, have the same authority as an assembly nominated by Universal Suffrage? Will the re-action, worn out by its own works, be as powerful as on the day after the detestable and bloody days of June, which had gathered public spirit under its banners? Will the spirit of revolution be so much subdued? Will Socialism be so much rebuked? Will the kings remain unshaken on their thrones, and the people be as powerless on their side? Is it, in a word, to be supposed that these currents of democracy, restrained with difficulty

and badly directed, will not swell and increase enough to bear down their dikes, and to inundate the whole world with insurrection and revolution?

It is impossible not to see behind the fatal year, 1852, all that I have rapidly painted in this picture, if this year, instead of producing the foundation of a government, produced the continuance of the present state of things,—a situation threatened with daily change, with no firm social foundation, gloomy all, around, and without a ray of light in the horizon.

XXXV.

To found a government!—that is the object! This object is so important, that everything must be sacrificed to it, except law and justice. We are ready to sacrifice our preferences, if we have any, to this end. Let the different parties do the same; let them stifle their selfishness, and abandon themselves to their patriotism. Ah! I do not do them the injury to believe that they wish to triumph at any cost, even at the cost of anarchy, which would serve their revenge, one against the other, but which, by deceiving them in their hopes, would bury them under their revenge. What they desire above all is, that France may prosper, certain as they are to live with her that national life which is common to us all, and which raises us above our wretched disputes, to unite us in one bond with our country and mankind. In order to effect this, a government must be founded strong enough to protect all, without excluding or oppressing any.

Otherwise we shall have a permanent revolution, under one form or another, with a name which will always be either a

mask or a signal. We should have neither a republic nor a government. France would be at the mercy of chance. It is not the future that she would have before her, it is the indefinite. She would be trembling at every change of power; in every election she would see a precipice, and she would soon reach the most deplorable of all situations for a people in a state of maturity—that of doubting of herself; and that doubt is the commencement of impotence, because it is the sign of decay in nations as well as in men, which for both is the certain omen of dissolution. Forms are changeable; parties are transformed or extinguished. The highest dignities, the most brilliant popularity, pass on to power only like pilots on board a ship. Constitutional monarchy succeeds traditional monarchy; a republic succeeds royalty. But in the midst of this eternal rotation, which is that of time and humanity, there is an eternal government presiding always,—that of law, justice, and of necessity. France waits for this. May the Assembly render it possible, and may Louis Napoleon render it certain.

XXXVI.

To resist that which is necessary is a fault; to resist that which is just is a crime. This crime and this fault will be avoided. Such is my sincerest wish. Too many governments have been cursed in history. It ought to be grateful, to merit the gratitude of a people, and the respect of posterity. It is still time; but the hands run fast over the dial of the life of a people. Let us hasten; the sincerest regrets are often no more than lasting and fruitless remorse. Let us not forget the memorable answer of General Lafayette to the Duke de

Montemart, when bringing him, by command of the old King, the repeal of the ordinances, and the proposition for a ministry presided over by Casimir-Périer. Lafayette answered, with the inflexible voice of destiny: "It is too late!" It was too late, also for the King Louis Philippe, on the 24th February, 1848, when he signed his abdication, which only served to precipitate a fall which it would have been so easy to avoid a little sooner by a timely concession. These great lessons will not be lost, for France must benefit by them. It never will be too late for her safety, be it whose hand it may which secures and accomplishes it.

XXXVII.

Had Louis Napoleon followed less discreetly the course dictated by reason in the situation in which he was placed; had he not boldly understood the necessity of the times; the withdrawal of the law of 31st May would, at this moment,* not only have been announced as a hope, but it would have been accomplished as an act of foresight, the correction of an error. In that case all would have been decided. The re-examination, which now appears impossible, would then have been inevitable. A new Assembly would have been on the eve of election. The people would have been the arbiters of the people. If the people wished to abdicate in favour of monarchy, they would have declared it. If they wished to uphold the Republic, they would equally have declared it. The Constitution

* Written in July, 1851. Three months later Louis Napoleon proposed the repeal of the law of 31st May; so correctly did the writer judge of him.

would have received all the changes required, and, in the plenitude of their power, the people would have selected the name in which they confided the most. If such name were that of the present President of the Republic, all the parties would have submitted, and the newly elected, on receiving the same honours as Washington in his new country, would have sought, like him, to immortalise himself by the same virtues. But, in order that all this may remain to be done, now, when I am finishing this portrait, the hour of the salvation of the people and the glory of the man must be put back to agree with the clock of the Elysée. Will this hour strike? To doubt it is to doubt the conscience, the understanding, the courage of the man whose life I am sketching. I, for one, have no doubt. The future will complete this portrait. It will give the clue to that countenance, which is a problem; to that life, which is an enigma. That clue I have not yet the right to describe. Shame or glory! A mean ambition with no prospect beyond to-day, or a glorious future! The ephemeral power of a party, or invincible power of right! The caprice of a fleeting popularity, or the lasting esteem of a nation! A great name that is expiring, or a great man who is born again! Louis Napoleon Bonaparte must decide. May God and France inspire him!

JULY, 1852.

All that precedes belongs to a former time. Except a few new touches, with regard to details which make no change in the general character of the picture, it is the same as it was BEFORE THE 2ND DECEMBER. There is not a word of this examination that I regret or suppress, and I may say, without vanity, that all my estimates of things and men have been fully justified by events. All that sound reason, and a correct sense of duty appeared to me to require in the policy of Louis Napoleon, has been done by him with that cold and calculating firmness, which never goes beyond necessity, but which always abides by it. In the month of October, 1851, Louis Napoleon proposed the repeal of the law of the 31st May to the Assembly. He thus opened the only pacific issue that remained in the struggle of parties. We know what followed; this salutary measure, which rendered possible all legal solutions, was repulsed by the majority, screened behind the rampart of a few votes. From that time, all was lost: there only remained the prospect of a dreadful anarchy. The Assembly, reeling with giddiness, committed every kind of mistake; the demagogues, rejoicing at the divisions which were to reduce to absolute impotence the army of order, loaded their guns, and awaited the approaching hour of vengeance and of terror. A revolution became inevitable; it only remained to be known how to commence it. Was it to be by

means of Socialism? Was it to be by the Assembly? Was it to be by the President? A revolution by the Assembly, although of a different origin, would have come to the same result as a revolution by Socialism—namely, anarchy! Whether a conventional government sat in the Palais Bourbon, or a committee of public safety were installed in the Hôtel de Ville—in reality, it was the same thing. In either case, democracy overflowed its banks, and France would have passed through a terrible crisis—perhaps a fatal one. A revolution by the President has produced the result before us—it has saved everything. France and society were on the eve of perishing in a difficulty made by the Constitution. It was necessary to get out of that difficulty at all hazards. Two outlets might yet be opened; one by lawful means, the other by necessity. The lawful means were the amendment of the Constitution; the necessity was the *coup d'état.*

When it was clearly proved that the door of escape, locked with treble bolts by the hand of the factions, could not possibly be re-opened, Louis Napoleon throwing himself upon the strength of his name and his right, resolutely demolished it, and achieved—*the Second of December.*

THE SECOND OF DECEMBER.

I.

THE general causes of *the Second of December* have been sufficiently studied in the picture I have drawn, whilst showing Louis Napoleon struggling against the aggressions of parties, and the impracticabilities of a Constitution which they had set up as their citadel. Still it is necessary to characterise the immediate causes that produced it. I am going to anticipate history, without in the least assuming to fulfil its task. History requires to consider and collect herself, long before she betakes herself to judge such events. It is only by viewing them from a distance that she can see them in their true light. I have not, then, the ridiculous arrogance to set myself up as the interpreter of its infallible justice. I stand before her only as a witness. I speak of what I have seen, what I have felt, and what I have thought.

France saw the year 1852 approaching. As it came on, it yawned like an abyss. Each day that flitted by in the march of time, bringing forward that year, increased her alarm. In the distant prospect there was civil war. Parties, instead of raising themselves to the sentiment of patriotism, let themselves sink down into selfishness. Each of them wished to see the triumph of his own opinions issue out of the crisis of his

country and of society. All placed their reliance in the public alarm. It seemed as if the governing power was on its death-bed, about to breathe its last sigh, and that greedy heirs were ready to dispute its fortune.

This state of the country, this ardent conflict of parties, this confusion of ideas, this complete want of foresight was faithfully represented in the Legislative Assembly, which was its personification and image. Sundered by passions, more than by opinions, this Assembly had degenerated into a real arena of civil war. Its discussions were nothing better than scenes of strife and scandal. They were the preludes of a general insurrection, which was soon to set the whole of France in a blaze.

The President of the Republic, who had determined to be the instrument of none, became an obstacle to all; he was the first to be overthrown. The struggle, long restrained, was about to declare itself. The parliamentary majority, whom the dread of Socialism had drawn nearer to the elect of the 10th December, fell from him, took up arms against him, openly menaced him, and thus created a revolutionary state of things, which could only be disentangled by a revolution.

Placed between the Socialist minority, and the monarchical majority, Louis Napoleon had but one refuge. This refuge was France. The law of the 31st May separated him from her. To abrogate this law by a vote, or to break it by a *coup d'état*, that was the question, that was the sole alternative which remained to him. He chose the first.

M. Léon Faucher, a capable minister, a man of courage and devotedness, but whose habits and personal feelings were too strongly attached to the parliamentary *regime*, could not

either comprehend or accept the necessities of this solution. He had been the *reporter* of the law of the 31st May. This law was his standard. He must stand or fall with it.

At the very moment when the reporter of the law of limited suffrage was coming out of the palace of St. Cloud, the reporter of the law of Universal Suffrage was entering it, in his turn. M. Billault was sent for by Louis Napoleon to succeed M. Léon Faucher. In the negociations which followed, the question was plainly stated. The President of the Republic was determined to escape from parties by an appeal to France. This appeal he wished to make through the law; but if the Assembly refused him the means, he was resolved to compel them to it by force.

M. Billault was the proper man for the first act in this determined course, in which every pacific means was to be exhausted. An eloquent orator, full of capacity, skilful in the management of public assemblies, the perils of the campaign proposed to him did not frighten him. His patriotism stimulated him; his prudence restrained him. To render conciliation more certain, he sought for adherents in the ranks of the majority, but without success. M. Billault saw how important it was not to leave any excuse for the resistance of parties. He did not wish to be an obstacle to a pacific solution which he sincerely desired, and he withdrew himself with a noble self-denial. It was then that a ministry, taken altogether from the sympathies, if not from the ranks of the majority, came down to propose the repeal of the law of the 31st May. This ministry was a real crisis.

II.

The President of the Republic loyally proposed to the Assembly the arbitration of the country. The Assembly refused it.

The consequences of this refusal naturally tended to precipitate themselves rapidly, and to find an escape in a 2nd December. What, in effect, took place the very day after the vote against the re-establishment of Universal Suffrage?

After having refused to the executive power which proposed it, to the nation that expected it, to necessity that urged it, the revocation of the law of the 31st May, the leaders of the majority, sensible of their weakness and impotence, were reduced to seek support in extreme measures, and entrench themselves behind a guard-house. After having abdicated all moral power, they appealed to brute force. They had no refuge left but in civil war, and they invented the measure of the Questors.

The Bill, respecting the Questors, was not a defensive, but an offensive act. It was nothing less than the legislative power reducing the executive power to military law.

One day, Philip II., King of Spain, had conceived a measure, extremely unpopular, and which was calculated to excite public opinion against him. The buffoon of his court, the only man, perhaps, that dared to be sincere, said to this monarch: "Sire, what will your Majesty do, if, when you say 'Yes,' the people say 'No'?"

"What shall I do," answered the King; "I will fight."

This historical trait is recalled to my mind, as I look back

to the attitude of the Legislative Assembly. Like the King of Spain, this majority was obstinately determined to combat against equity and necessity. It said "No!" when France said "Yes!" and like him it prepared to fight.

Fortunately the Assembly did not combat, but still it was vanquished. Legal authority has succumbed, no doubt; but social order has been saved. We have learned by great and mournful experiments the depth to which a country may fall by the omnipotence of Assemblies. History is like the globe. She revolves upon herself; she obeys general laws, and invariable rules; she presents the same phenomena in presence of the same principles and the same ambitious passions. She is but the effigy of the human heart.

In England, under the reign of Charles I., the Parliament wishing to establish its dictatorship, only paved the way for its fall. The King had, to defend him, his faithful cavaliers, fanatic champions of uncontrollable prerogative. Lord Essex was at the head of the Parliament. At the same time, whilst Charles became weaker and weaker, and the constituent party was wearing itself out, a crafty man lurked in the shade, who ably availed himself of views and passions opposed to one another. That man was Cromwell.

And when the Parliament had delivered up everything to this ambitious man; when it had resigned its own dictatorship, to make way for the personal dictatorship of the Protector; when it had sacrificed Strafford and Charles himself; when it had acknowledged all, dared all, and undergone all, even to moral degradation; Cromwell stood up boldly and contemptuously above all those who had been his accomplices, and whose master he had become. He then ignominiously turned them

out, and, singling out some of the members present, he apostrophised them thus:—"You are a drunkard,—You, Sir, are a debauched fellow,—You are a thief,—and, You are an adulterer." All of them fled before these anathemas. The Dictator pointing to the mace, the emblem of parliamentary supremacy, said to the soldiers: "Take away that bauble." Then, locking the gates of Westminster Hall, he put the keys into his pocket. The next day a posting bill was found on the door, bearing these words, "A furnished house to let."

Such is history. Thus do dictators conduct themselves, who employ the tribune as a shield. To this do Assemblies come, which transgress their rights to give loose to their passions and their caprices. They think themselves very strong when they triumph, but their victories last but a day; they only elevate themselves above the law, to submit afterwards to ambitious men, whom they aggrandise by the sacrifice of their own dignity, and by evoking the contempt of history.

The Assembly ran the risk of finding a Cromwell, to oppress and degrade it. It has found a Bonaparte who has vanquished it, but who has saved France.

III.

When conciliation became impossible between two powers, and war inevitable, the *coup d'état* became necessary and legitimate.

The house was on fire. Should we have hesitated to break down the doors to escape from the flames? By declaring the dissolution of the Assembly he opened a safe issue to society: Louis Napoleon did no more. He violated the Constitution; but he saved society.

The country, in the exercise of its sovereignty, has acquitted him. History, that weighs everything, designs as well as actions, in the balance of her infallible justice, cannot condemn him without disgracing the nation, which, after having recognised him as its liberator, has glorified him by raising him to the Empire.

On the 2nd December, 1851, Paris woke up in the midst of abrupt and exciting events of the greatest moment. At the corners of the streets a page of history, composed as by enchantment, like the action of a mysterious drama, appeared to every eye in the form of placards, announcing that the Assembly was dissolved, and that Universal Suffrage was re-established, and that France was summoned on the 20th December to its *Comitia*, to vote on the establishment of a new government.

The crowd passed and re-passed before these placards, which no one guarded, and which every one respected. In a few hours, in the most impenetrable secrecy, by the initiative act of a single man, a revolution was accomplished. The appearance of Paris was not threatening; but it wore a sort of bewildered look, a look strangely vacant, which it is impossible to define. It was neither a protest nor an approval; it was neither anger nor indifference; people felt relieved, but not secure. The year 1852 disappeared, as the cloud that bears the thunder, disappears with the clap that has just broken forth. A whole world of uncertainty was about to be included in that critical, that anxious day. The port was only a few steps off; but, before anchoring within it, the huge wave must be passed through, which rose up gloomy and terrible, and might submerge all.

This indefinite anxiety was the feeling which succeeded, almost immediately, to the surprise caused at first by the news

of the *coup d'état.* What attitude would the Representatives assume, deprived, as they were, of their functions? Would the faubourgs rise? Would the departments submit? Would the army hesitate between the Constitution and discipline? Questions were made on all these doubtful subjects, which left in every heart a weight of uncertainty and anxiety. Every one looked about him, and listened. Impressions were so mingled, sentiments were so diverse, that no sign was to be seen either of a course to be taken or determination to be followed. It seemed as if everything was left to chance, and that, in this decisive day, only what fate should ordain was to come.

IV.

A long time before the *coup d'état* was accomplished, this word, so familiar in French history, had resounded in public opinion, like the tocsin of the Constitution invaded and of the Republic in danger. Louis Napoleon did not desire to inscribe it in his annals; he knew that such extremities could only be justified by desperate situations. He was resolved to have recourse to them, only after having exhausted all the means of conciliation, and only after no choice was left to him between his oath to the Constitution and his duty towards France. The awful responsibilities of his course did not appal him; but neither did they excite him. Too just to anticipate the hour of necessity, he would have preferred death to inaction, when he had to accomplish the promises of his destiny. His oath would have restrained him, if his conscience had not freed him, from it, and his mission had not imperiously urged him on. He ran the risk of being insulted by all parties, and

of perishing ignominiously under the feet of anarchy, in order to reap the glory of triumphing as a liberator.

Up to this time, his patriotism and his reason had disdained every opportunity which might have seduced his ambition and accelerated his fortunes. Several times the course of events, the quarrels and intrigues of parties, the attempts to foment civil war and anarchy, had put the dictatorship within reach of his hands, and he had rejected it. Violence was repugnant to him. He felt that in politics it is lawful to make war, only after having striven to the last to make peace. He would have been glad to move in concert with the Assembly, and he would not have moved without it, had it not obstinately refused to follow him.

In the month of November, 1851, the hope of conciliation had vanished. France found herself placed between an August 10th and an 18th Brumaire. Louis Napoleon was conscious of this, and accepted, without hesitation, the *coup d'état* as a necessity, which previously had never entered into his ideas but as a last resource. Once, however, this last resource was forced upon him, Louis Napoleon cast his eyes around him to look for auxiliaries capable of devoting themselves like him, and of understanding the greatness of the act, without trembling at its perils.

By his side, intimate in his councils and friendship, was a man who had been much distinguished in the last years of the monarchy. This was the Count de Morny, whose mind was as simple as it was elevated, whose character was inflexible, and whose heart was noble,—a true gentleman, by nature and education. M. de Morny had profoundly and attentively studied all the changes of the time since the election of the 10th

December. His parliamentary experience and character, his acquirements, his courtesy, his authority, which his grace and superiority tended alike to make people accept, rendered him wonderfully apt to serve as the intermediary between the President and the majority. He represented political Bonapartism among the Orleanists and Legitimists around him, by whom he was much esteemed. He had endeavoured to effect a reconciliation in the minds of the enemies' ranks; he was an ambassador of peace. But when he saw that all was useless, and found before him the same blind factions which he had formerly opposed, with the patriotism of a true statesman the ambassador turned soldier, and was the first to advise war, after having vainly tried to negociate an union of the different elements of which the party of order was composed, an union which alone could render it invincible against Socialism.

M. de Persigny had his place marked out in this final struggle. He represented Bonapartism, militant and chivalrous. He had sacrificed all to this cause. Twice, at Boulogne and Strasbourg, he had risked his life heroically for it. M. de Persigny, a statesman by character and turn of mind, before becoming one by intelligence and experience in business, had acquired an elevated principle of active life from the previous delicacy of his personal sentiments. Naturally impetuous and penetrating, he had felt the force of Bonapartism before he yet understood it. France and the Empire were to him inseparable; he did not for a moment doubt that, after having been severed for a time by accident, these two things, equally imperishable in his eyes, must be brought together again by the law of reason and the necessities of civilisation. M. de Maupas was a raw recruit in politics. Rapidly advanced to one of the most important prefec

tures of France by his merit and his energy, he had made a deep impression on the President, whose rapid penetration needs but cast a look upon a man to appreciate him. M. de Maupas had not been mixed up, like M. de Persigny, in the struggles of Bonapartism, but he felt its power instinctively before he had acquired its faith. An enterprising nature, easily excited and warmed by what is grand and sublime, he was gradually conducted towards a cause whose object was to revive and strengthen the principles of authority, by personifying it in a ruler as popular as glory and as righteous as law. Endowed with the spirit of government and order, he accepted without hesitation all that was necessary, and he comprehended without effort all that was generous. The firmness of his character, softened by the elegance of the man of the world, and the benevolence of a good heart, rendered him fit to govern others without mortifying them. He was one of those rare mortals who support and enforce authority without passing the bounds of moderation. The President of the Republic, by confiding to him the prefecture of police in an hour of danger, not only made choice of a bold and resolute hand for the struggle, but who moreover had indicated beforehand a clear head and flexible talents for a new ministerial institution, demanding the most eminent and extraordinary qualifications. General Leroy de Saint-Arnaud had just arrived from Africa; he had conducted with success a war which requires more than courage and military talent, and for which calculation, reflection, and prudence are needful. Africa is not only a field of glory, it is also a school for government. Politics, as well as war, may be learned there. There Marshal Bugeaud became a great statesman; Lamoricière, Cavaignac, Bedeau, Changarnier, returned from it with aptitudes for government, badly

directed perhaps, but indisputable. General Saint Arnaud, having scarcely alighted from his battle-horse, after the expedition of Kabylia, took his seat as minister of war on the benches of the Legislative Assembly; he possessed at once conception and decision. As prompt to conceive as he was resolute to execute, he was the man Louis Napoleon required to lend an irresistible impulse to the army, when the day was come to strike a decisive blow for the salvation of society. The army of Paris, composed of picked regiments, was commanded by General Magnan, whose authority is as great as his renown is glorious, having under his command young, ardent, and devoted generals; this army was an invincible shield for the President to withstand parliamentary usurpations. It is but just to say, to its eternal honour, that it became also the protector of the country, of civilisation, and of religion. It was with these devoted adherents and these forces that Louis Napoleon attempted the *coup d'etat*. History will scarcely believe it. His determination, his enterprise, his daring courage, and the concurrence of a few friends and partizans, not above four or five in number, proved sufficient for him to alter in a few hours the destinies of France. Behold this little group of men met during the night, between the 1st and 2nd December, in one of the halls of the Elysée. They are composed, resolute, fearless equally of danger and of reproach; they do not conspire, for there are no accomplices waiting the signal. A few hours only separate them from the act they meditate, and this deed is about to spread itself over an immense scene known only to themselves. They have contracted for no man's hire. Private interests, cupidity, ambition, have not been admitted to their councils. They depend altogether for their justification, upon the claims

that society has upon their swords. Yes, they are only but five or six men, and this little party, when the action begins, is going perhaps to change the destinies of a nation—of an age!

Is this, then, a conspiracy? Is this, then, even a revolution? No! Conspiracies and revolutions are brought about by very different operations. Do not let us try to fathom that which cannot be sounded, and let us acknowledge that the act of the 2nd December is one of those measures which reason may either approve or condemn, but which she is bound to admit as one of the most striking manifestations of that superior force which occasionally overturns parties and institutions, and hurries on a people, by means which human wisdom had neither foreseen nor suspected, towards the end marked out by Providence.

V.

The *coup d'état* of the 2nd December gave rise to a double resistance, of which one was powerless, and the other bloody. I must be careful to distinguish between passion and duty. I will not mix together the representatives who collected at the mayor's house, in the 10th Arrondissement, believing that their dignity and their responsibility made it incumbent on them to protest, though hopelessly, with those conspirators and demagogues, who, both in Paris and in the departments, raised up the tattered Constitution, only to use it as the standard of Socialism and barbarism.

The Constitution of 1848 was condemned before it was overturned. All parties appealed to it, and all of them disowned it; consequently it had none to avenge it but the representatives who met together at the hall of the 10th

Arrondissement with their protest. Those who fought, did not contend for the Constitution. They were not the soldiers of the law, but of anarchy, which is the overthrow of all laws.

What would have happened if Louis Napoleon had failed on the 2nd December, instead of succeeding? Would the Constitution, which on that day he dissolved, have been the more durable?

Triumphant insurrection would not have re-opened the doors of the Palais Bourbon to the Assembly, but would have thrown open the doors of the Jacobin Club to the rule of the mob. As to the Constitution, no hand would have had the power to sew its rags together again. Sometimes a Constitution, after being violated, may be avenged, but never re-established. It was in the name of the Constitution of 1791 that the Girondists had secretly instigated the day of the 10th August. The next day, the Montagnards wrote, with the pen of Saint Just and Robespierre, the Constitution of 1793.

It was in the name of the Constitution of 1793 that the sections of Paris got up the conflict of the 13th Vendémiaire, against the National Convention. Barras and Bonaparte defended the Convention, and with cannon balls ushered in the Constitution of 1795.

It was in the name of the Convention of 1795 that the Directory made the 18th Fructidor. Soon after, the 18th Brumaire burst forth, and the Constitution of the 22nd Frimaire established the Consulate, and pointed to the Empire.

Was it not, likewise, in the name of the Charter of 1814 that the revolution of July was accomplished on the barricades? The cry was "*Vive la Charte!*" and yet the first consequence of victory was to destroy it, and supersede it with that of 1830.

In 1848 the same thing occurred. It was in the name of the Charter of 1830 that the Opposition drew up its famous Act of Impeachment, which was to prove the death-warrant of a dynasty. Three days after, the Republic was proclaimed.

Such is the fate of Constitutions when once they have been torn. Their defenders, themselves, revenge, only to destroy them. Thus, of this double resistance, which the act of the 2nd December was to rouse,—the one, the resistance by law, was feeble and impotent; the other, the resistance by blood, was fierce and detestable. But, if the second could have been combined with the first, the danger would have become great. This was the coalition it was thought necessary to prevent, at any price.

Fortunately, the energy and the admirable zeal of the men Louis Napoleon had chosen as his auxiliaries never let the final result remain for a moment uncertain. M. de Morny, minister of the interior, M. de Saint Arnaud, minister of war, M. de Maupas, minister of police, General Magnan, commanding the army, each of them from his particular post, was able to communicate the impulse, the assurance, the confidence, the intrepidity by which they were animated, to all those whose concurrence and participation were necessary. There was neither hesitation nor weakness. Measures were taken with marvellous foresight, and executed with unexampled exactness. The *coup d'état* agreed so well with the instinct of the country, that, without reflection, without calculation, every one wished it success; and at once, in spite of the heavy responsibility attached to it, the deed found thousands of accomplices to acknowledge and defend it.

VI.

The Legislative Assembly was conscious of its impotence from the moment of its dissolution. It thought it incumbent on its dignity not to fall, however, without a protest. The representatives of the people endeavoured to collect at various points. The meeting at the hall of the 10th Arrondissement, which was the only important and significant one, may be considered as the last act of the parliamentary system.

What happened is well known. About two hundred representatives, belonging, for the most part, to the majority, had assembled in the hall of the mayoralty of the 10th Arrondissement, under the direction of M. Benoist d'Azy. As for M. Dupin, he chose to consider himself a prisoner in his palace. A final debate was opened, in the midst of great excitement and tumult. General Oudinot was invested with the command of the troops. The deposition of the President of the Republic was declared. M. Berryer, who had refused to vote or speak in favour of Universal Suffrage, had just proclaimed it, from a window, to the people, who had answered, "It is too late." Suddenly there was a cry of "Soldiers coming!" The Assembly, shorn of its glory, and crushed, overturned, folded itself majestically within its robe of legality.

"Gentlemen," cried their president, "remember that Europe has her eyes on you, and that posterity will judge you." A corporal presents himself: they point to the Constitution. An officer comes in: they read to him the 68th Article of the Constitution. But discipline, which is the true Constitution of soldiers, orders them to obey, and march. The representatives

are arrested, placed between double files, and conducted in this manner to the barracks on the Quai d'Orsay, through crowds of spectators, rather curious than affected.

This was the way in which parliamentary sovereignty terminated in France. This system—which engendered so many revolutions; which shook so many governments; which overthrew two dynasties—was dissolved by the order of a corporal, and the command of a subaltern officer.

Sixty years before, it entered as a master the hall of the Tennis Court, at Versailles. On the 2nd December, it went as a prisoner into a barrack. Thus Louis Napoleon was avenging Louis XVI., and raising up that authority on whose ruins the Revolution had erected her altar, to flatter, puff up, and fascinate the people.

VII.

Doubtless, it was a most distressing sight to see two hundred representatives made prisoners by a company of sharpshooters, locked up in a barrack, and sent to Mount Valerian in police vans. Illustrious men, generals, orators, jurists, who had always served their country well—some with brilliancy—were treated like rebels. The wrong can only revert to the sad necessity of events which had brought about this consummation. The representatives of the parliamentary system obeyed the dictates of honour by protesting. Louis Napoleon followed out his destiny, and fulfilled his mission, by destroying every obstacle to public safety. On one side, we see the vanquished, who fell with dignity; on the other, a liberator, who triumphed through his zeal, his tranquillity of mind, and his inflexible character.

The representatives who protested, knew, beforehand, that their protest was powerless. If it could have been efficacious, they would, perhaps, have hesitated. They went to the hall of the 10th Arrondissement, not to vindicate an opinion, but to save their honour. It was the most creditable place for those who were not at the Elysée. Count de Morny, whose noble nature well understands whatever is upright and generous, acknowledged this, himself, when giving the order for their arrest. He said, on one occasion, "Had I not been engaged in the *coup d'état*, I should probably have gone to the hall of the 10th Arrondissement."

While all this drama was unfolding itself, in the exact order of the preliminary plan, neither anxiety nor excitement was visible in Louis Napoleon. The evening before the *coup d'état*, there was a reception at the Elysée. Never had the Prince appeared more himself or affable. Having retired early to his private apartment, a few minutes of time, and a few words imparted to his zealous and intrepid friends, sufficed to settle all. Then he went to sleep, as sure and confident as he had been on the eve of Strasbourg and Boulogne, without even inquiring whether this night divided him from a triumph or a catastrophe.

On the morrow, during the preparations of the day, and as long as the struggle continued undecided, he never flinched. Although he never doubted of the victory, one thought alone occupied him; this was to prevent a battle by a resolute stand, to avoid the effusion of blood by all preventive measures, to discourage resistance, and, in a word, to smother civil war before its explosion. He would have wished there had been but the defeated and no victims.

In hemming in resistance by law, as was done with a foresight so energetic, and in preventing its coalition with the brutal resistance by blood, all authority was taken from the last. It would not adorn itself with the standard of the Constitution; the red flag of insurrection alone remained for its use.

VIII.

When the news arrived from the departments, a unanimous burst of pain and indignation broke forth in Paris. The *Jacquerie* had just hoisted its flag. Bands of assassins overran the country, marched upon towns, invaded private dwellings, pillaged, burned, and killed everywhere, leaving behind them the abhorrence of abominable crimes, which brought us back to the worst days of barbarism. It was no longer fanaticism, such as is found too often in the conflict of parties; it was cannibalism, such as the strongest imaginations would scarcely conceive. Happily, I may say, there was nothing French in this atrocious slaughter; for there was nothing human in it. No! they are not men who thus degrade their species; hounded on by those ferocious instincts, which God has set up as a terror to all intelligent and moral beings living in the world he has created. Such men are below the beasts of the field. Society recognises them no more among her members who partake of her life and her spirit; and all, even to nature herself, deny them, as a mother repudiates her parricidal sons.

These horrible crimes were not only a subject of grief and abhorrence for all minds, without respect to parties, they were also a subject of most serious reflection to every honest mind. There was no opening left to doubt: 1852 covered an abyss.

Events, which broke out so suddenly, partly disclosed the mouth of this deep and terrible gulf, which would have swallowed up everything,—the Republic, the homes, our native land, civilised society, and all. By the sinister blaze of those torches which lighted incendiary fires, by the funereal light of those murderous volleys,—which killed our soldiers at their posts, the citizens in their houses, the householder in his drawing-room, the father of a family before his wife and their children,—every one looked on, and measured with dismay the greatness of the peril. It was not civil war we were threatened with. Civil war is always a scourge, no doubt: but, at all events, if it causes our tears to be shed, it does not make us blush. Honour there may be in dying for a principle; and, if those who thus die, are condemned as traitors by the laws, they sometimes pass for heroes with posterity, which absolves and glorifies them. But the cannibals who butcher, merely for the pleasure of slaughter, and who, instead of combatting, murder their victims, are at best the base mercenaries of social war. Fight they do not, they only assassinate.

Ah! no man has confounded the people of France with a handful of assassins. The people was not there, it was but the scum. The people who work, and who by their work acquire their subsistence; the people who are at the plough and at the loom; the people who bring up their children in the love of their country and of God; the people,—of soldiers, workmen, labourers, of citizens, and of Christians,—have nothing in common with such crimes. They reprove them, they curse them, they despise them: they would rise, if needs were, in a mass to punish and to smother the attempt, in the irresistible power of

their patriotism and devotedness. In a word, the real people do not menace society, but protect it.

But if this people, almost unanimous, whom I have always loved, and whom I look upon as the strength of the country, whether labouring in the fields or fighting on the frontier,—if this people were innocent of these loathsome instincts and of these crimes still more abominable, it is unfortunately true that, by their side, and in the midst of them, lived a restless and remorseless faction, for whom the Republic was but a false mask, beneath which lay immorality, cupidity, all the most shameless appetites, all the most abject propensities, all the rancorous hatred of jealousy and ambition. This faction,—all the world knows it,—is called the faction of the Demagogues.

IX.

Do you know what has ruined democracy? It is this faction of the demagogues. The Republic met with a great misfortune! Instead of belonging to itself, and showing itself to the country in its true principles, in the conservative and liberal force of its right, it yielded itself up to deplorable excesses, and slipped from the hands of the men who had curbed, moderated, and purified it, into those of the men who exaggerated, perverted, and deformed it in the eyes of the country. The Republic became Socialism. This it was that first deteriorated, and then ruined it. Then, in face of turbulent and violent demagogues, who sought to destroy everything, was formed the league of the old and rigid parties. Several of these parties were of unbending principles—determined to yield nothing. From this resulted that terrible daily condition of things; a state of revolution and not of govern-

ment, which rendered the Constitution an empty word, and which led to confusion and chaos. Yes, to all those who examined things with coolness, it was evident that the government was buried in a man of impassibility.

Tossed by the surging wave, laid on her side by the tempest, like a ship that has lost her masts and her rudder, it was going straight upon the rocks in an unknown gloom. Social war was inevitably about to come forth from these personal rivalries, from these struggles of the ambitious and of the more petty pretensions, from these wavering spirits, and these jealousies of power and fortune. Brutal Socialism, a vile and abject minority, but audacious and capable of descending to any shifts, was ready to attempt anything. The narrow passage of 1852 might have led us to its fleeting triumph through blood, and over the ruins of France and of civilization.

One day, the President of the Republic makes a bold appeal to the sovereignty of the people, in order that a law, impossible to be excused, may yield to the supreme claims of society. All parties are leagued against him, and present a shield of legality to resist him. But Louis Napoleon only succeeded more completely. He succeeded by two motives, which are these: the aversion of the people for the civil war of factions, and the aversion of every one for social war.

Whoever was near enough to see the great event of the 2nd December can declare that, on the 2nd December, when the Assembly was dissolved and the Constitution destroyed, there was a great perplexity in men's minds and a great disturbance in men's consciences. It was not everybody who rightly understood the object of the *coup d'état*. On the 6th December, when the first intelligence was received in Paris

of the *Jacquerie*, Louis Napoleon's preventive blow was at once absolved by public feeling. It became evident to all, that the nephew of the Emperor had been a providential instrument in an act of social salvation, and that, by his wisdom and genius, he had risen above the range of ordinary minds, and to that lofty apprehension which disconcerts the most skilful combinations of man, and which, through every storm and crisis, carries a people back to the true condition of their greatness. The day on which social war broke out in so many parts of the country, it was doomed to find the federation of the entire country marshalled to oppose it.

Republicans, Orleanists, Legitimists, Bonapartists—took a common interest in this crisis. Pillage and assassination, vengeance, hatred, and despair, were all abroad; those infernal gods of demagogues. Nothing was left but to defend ourselves by invoking the law and justice, those eternal gods of a democracy which would not be dishonoured, and of a nation which would not perish.

X.

France had, therefore, in the highest degree, the consciousness of her situation, when voting as she did on the 20th December, 1851. She obeyed the imperative necessity of her security; she followed the irresistible course of the force of things; she yielded to the influence of reason and good sense: her very existence was at stake. Happy and grateful for having been saved, she left to Louis Napoleon the task of forming a government; she recognised his mission, and confidently awaited the results.

That mission, at that time, might be expressed in two words; it was to terminate the revolution, and constitute authority. How could authority be constituted? Where were its principles? Where was its force? Where was its right?

Is it in the aristocracy? They have only left behind them some glorious historical records, and a wreck broken up and dispersed through modern society.

Is it the monarchy? We have had three attempts to form it in less than half a century:—the victorious monarchy of Napoleon; the hereditary monarchy of the Bourbons; the parliamentary monarchy of the Orleans family. All three have fallen, in spite of the forces that sustained them—the force of glory, that of tradition, that of interest. Nothing could avail: everything failed.

Is it in the middle class of the citizens? We had its reign almost exclusively about eighteen years. The middle class possesses doubtlessly, great virtues, remarkable talents, and valuable qualities. It has a correct view of political affairs; has judgment, prudence, foresight, tolerance, and intelligence; but it is deficient in two qualities, essential to government: it wants that devoted zeal, which ennobles power, and raises the mind to heroism; it wants the spirit of initiative enterprise, which realises progress, by aggrandising it perpetually with all the conquests of civilization, and with all improvements of humanity.

XI.

France is then neither an aristocracy, nor a monarchy, nor an oligarchy. Do you know what she is? I will not hesitate to say the word, though it may sound unpleasantly to the ears of

many,—doubtlessly because it has something in unison with the false notes of bad doctrines, which have perverted its character, and the passions that have dishonoured its career—France is a democracy!

She is a democracy by her soil, which has gone from the hands of those who held it hereditarily, only to be divided into estates, fields, and furrows, into the hands of the farmers who cultivate, who sow it, who manure it, and support themselves and their families upon it.

She is a democracy by her capital, which is spread abroad, in infinitely small amounts to multiply itself, to change hands, and to increase by all the ways that work and labour afford it.

She is a democracy by her habits and customs, which render her more sensible to the want of civil equality, than to the need of political equality.

She is a democracy by her code, which allows no privilege whatever in modern society, and which brings down every influence, and every condition, to a level with law and common right.

She is a democracy by her very army, recruited from the fields and from the workshops, and whose military spirit only reflects the glory of the Empire upon its standard, and in the hearts of the soldiers returns the echo of their immortal battles, which elevated the sovereignty of a people in the sovereignty of a single man.

But, if France is a democracy by her nature, by her interests, by her feelings, by her institutions, and even by her passions, as well as by her virtues; does it follow that we have ever truly possessed a democratic government since the French revolution has deluged the world?

No! we have had nothing but its tempests, its convulsions, its birth of one; we have never had the practical, sincere, honest, social, and serious application of democracy.

Let us not speak of the past; let us hand over to the execration of history those tyrants who have polluted and stained the human race, under the pretext of liberating them. Let us concern ourselves with the present. Was it democracy—that confusion of systems and ideas, of which our time has had the melancholy spectacle? Did democracy show any signs of life in those wild theories and absurdities? Did it believe itself powerful, because they propounded in its name the organization of labour, the hatred of capital, the destruction of property, the overthrow of family ties, the contempt of God? Did it consider it a great triumph, that the illustrious Marshal Bugeaud was not elected from the list headed by Corporal Rattier and Sergeant Boichot, and in which the Generals Cavaignac and Lamoricière came last? Did it see either much honour or much profit in those hollow and sounding phrases, in those ridiculous meetings among themselves, and in those odious plots? And because they sang the *Marseillaise* in a tavern, were the people to rise with an electric shock at Vienna, Varsovy, and Berlin! No! this was not democracy!

The misfortune was, that France had confounded a true principle with passions which are abhorrent and absurdities which are monstrous.

I who write these lines, and many others, was fascinated by a generous illusion. I believed that democracy would be founded, constituted, govern itself by its own force. I believed in good faith; and thus it is that, never having been a republican, and never having foreseen, or devised, or asked for

the Republic, that I accepted it, as a practical form of government, and perhaps necessary to power. I accepted it as all France did, which frankly consented to give it a trial. For that illusion to become a truth, there was but one thing wanting to democracy, the perception of its own power. Furiously drawn in contrary directions by different schools and parties, perverted by Socialism, dishonoured by terrorism, exaggerated by some, stopped and stifled by others, it had lost its way, its rule, its light, and its law; it strayed visibly from its object; it slipped down the precipice; it was about to be wrecked on the rocks of anarchy: 1852 appeared to all as an ominous and tragic epoch. Men clearly foresaw the '93 of the nineteenth century.

XII.

The 2nd December preserved us from 1852. The *coup d'état* has destroyed Socialism and revolution. From the 10th August, which we verged upon, we have leaped at one single bound over '93, and up to the 18th Brumaire.

A dictatorship might have arisen from this crisis; a government has issued therefrom.

Louis Napoleon, the conqueror of parties, the chief of the nation from whom he received his mission, has taken no advantage of his unlimited power, unless to give France a Constitution seriously studied. Is this Constitution conformable with law, with justice, and with reason? Does it agree with the manners and customs and the wants of France?

Let us analyse it in its philosophical and political spirit, in order to be able to appreciate it better in its consequences and

in its effects. This study is more particularly opportune, inasmuch as the Constitution of the 15th January has been wisely maintained, like that of the Empire. Nothing could serve better to prove that it is not the mere work of caprice, and that, according to the expression of its author, it is the result of time and experience.

GENERAL IDEAS

ON

THE NEW CONSTITUTION,

PHILOSOPHICALLY AND POLITICALLY CONSIDERED.

I.

God is the principle and the guide of all society! All right, all justice, all truth, all progress, descend from, and re-ascend to Him! His supremacy, the only one which is infallible, eternal, and inviolable, manifests itself in the religious world by revelation, and in the philosophic and politic by human reason.

II.

Human reason, a reflection of the Divine reason, is, therefore, the true sovereignty of nations. By this it is that governments are founded, and that nations endure and enlarge themselves, with its light to guide them. Human reason teaches peoples to know their rights, and teaches governments to know their duties.

III.

The divine right of a monarchy is not more self-evident a problem than the sovereign sway of the passions of the multitude. Men are fallible like their natures. They reckon among their days those of error and folly. But, even amidst the wildest and most furious mobs, a sentiment will come forth, which purifies itself in proportion to the elevation it attains above the influence of human passions. This sentiment is an emanation from the souls of the people, bearing with it the opinion which it had formed in its high ascent; that opinion which is the most true, the most just, the most honest, and the most generous, in every intelligence, as in every conscience.

IV.

Out of this tribute of all men's individual understandings public reason is constituted. No government is legitimate, no constitution is durable, unless derived from this source. Thus is explained to us how it happens that, under republics, as well as under monarchies, opinion constantly rules. But, opinion may be misled; and this is what produces those accidents, through the consequences of which society is often driven out of its regular course of development and progress.

V.

What is a government?

What is a constitution?

A government is a collection of institutions, created in

harmony with the manners and customs, the annals, the ideas, and the wants of a people, to protect them, to direct them, to raise them up, day by day, in dignity, in liberty, in morality, in well-being; and thus to realise, within the scope of feasibility and justice, all the conditions of felicity and grandeur of which human nature is susceptible.

A constitution is a contract, which regulates the relations between the governing and the governed, with the double object of preventing anarchy, which is the death of liberty, and tyranny, which is the shame and stigma of authority.

VI.

"There is no everlasting government; there is no unchangeable constitution.

"Nothing is absolute in politics, except justice. The change of manners and customs, the progression of ideas, the action of time, the hazard of events, create necessities it would be madness to resist. All that is needful is legitimate. France has had twelve constitutions in less than sixty years. Each of these constitutions affected to be the definitive law of the country. When they fell, the duty of their sincere admirers was, not to revenge, but to re-place them.

VII.

Every country finds the conditions of its government in the conditions of its nature and its civilisation. A constitution that is not moulded upon the society it aspires to rule, can make good none of the assurances it lays claim to. It is but a

source of agitation and a cause of revolution. This will serve to explain the never-ceasing disturbances which, since 1789, have prevented every government from becoming settled, and from lasting. All these governments have been more or less a contradiction to the only powers that could consolidate and protect them,—namely force and unity.

VIII.

Without unity, there is no authority or liberty. Without unity, liberty degenerates into licentiousness, and authority into despotism. But how can unity be brought about? By two methods—by a central power, or by a power which is either aristocratic, oligarchical, democratic, or parliamentary. In France it is the central power, which, since the origin of monarchy, has successively gathered around it all the scattered powers of the nation. After having triumphed over theocracy, it triumphed over feudality, then over parliament; and, as it favoured the local district interests, it met with support from the third estate, to pass on to the royal absolutism of Louis XIV., and crumbled of itself under the revolt of that very third estate it had elevated. The central power, fallen into a sort of tutelage under the system of the assemblies, became completely powerless. Tossed about by all the tempests of opinion, it fell sometimes on the right, sometimes on the left. The supremacy of the assemblies, from 1791, to 1799, was but the confused jumble of united passions and of conflicting interests, howling amidst dreadful tempests. Napoleon, by accomplishing the 18th Brumaire, enabled the Government to resume the force of unity. But war did not leave him the op

portunity to employ it for a final and enduring organisation of political society; he used it chiefly as a lever, to uplift the world.

IX.

The citizen classes, on their side, endeavoured to reconstruct the French unity in the constitutional monarchy, but in conformity with their tastes. They failed in the work. The democratic Republic, created by the Constitution of 1848, made up of the English and American systems, establishing an irrevocable and responsible President, in presence of an independent and sovereign Assembly, was broken in turn upon the rocks of its own flagrant contradictions, and its own impossibilities; not subject to revision according to law, it was overthrown by focre. The people viewed the fall of the Assembly with indifference, although emanating from itself. How was this? Because that Assembly, instead of representing the unity of the nation, represented only a fractional part—the disunion and disorder of parties.

X.

Hence, a constitution can now have but one object, to organise unity by the power derived from the people. The thing to be done is merely to fix the traditions which connect the annals of Charlemagne with those of Napoleon, traditions invariably sequent amidst the political changes of social transitions which centuries have heaped up.

XI.

Unity reposes on three foundations, of which the national

sovereignty is the principle, universal suffrage the voice, and government the corollary and accomplishment.

XII.

The executive power being derived from the nation, can only emerge from it with its spirit, its will, and its conscience. It is neither a dynasty, nor a party, nor a family, nor a man. It is a people.

XIII.

As the executive power alone ought to hold the government of the country, every power that does not govern is hurried on by fate to abdicate or to oppress. The government proposes and promulgates the laws. The legislative body discusses them, accepts or rejects them. The judicial power applies them. Thus a warrant is afforded to this principle, henceforth passed into an axiom—"The separation of powers is the first condition of a free government."

XIV.

A constitution, to be lasting, ought not to expose to animosity and overthrow two powers united by the same origin, which ought to concur in good understanding and mutual concord for the benefit of their common country. This is why it becomes material that each of the great powers of the state should be confined in its attributes, by allowing to the government to propose, to promulgate, and to administer the

shackle it. These assemblies for the last sixty years have been so many military camps, wherein factions have alternately exhibited the spectacle of their tournaments, struggles, ardent contests, and convulsions. It is time for them to become places of real business, in which men of learning and special aptness shall fashion and improve our institutions according to the interest of the country.

XIX.

Parliamentary government is the government of a turbulent country, whilst a government ruled by its elected chief is that of a country grave and serene. Between the first and the second there is exactly the same difference as between a sovereign in revolt and a sovereign in council.

XX.

It is impossible ministers can carry on the affairs of the country and attend to the violent debates of an assembly at the same time. Ministers ought to be grave, diligent men, most assiduous in the transaction of the immense affairs they have to expedite, men of action rather than of words. Mixed up with factions they no longer belong to themselves, and no longer obey the authority of which they are the agents. They embarrass power when they do not betray it. If, on the contrary, they remain aloof from factious associations and their intrigues, which are inevitably concocted when many men are assembled together, they are superior to all petty parties, and they preserve to the government an independence that is at the same time its force and its dignity.

XXI.

The responsibility of ministers ought to be justly determined. But the legislative power cannot have privileges of irresponsibility. Let us not, however, forget that, for a government of opinion, the guarantee lies in opinion, in the first place, in the publicity of official acts, in the scrupulous investigation of accounts, in a reasonable and moderate use of a liberty regulated by the laws, in universal suffrage, the principle of election, and, above all, in the expression of the public conscience, which no government founded on the national sovereignty can resist.

XXII.

The fatal error of the absolute partisans of a parliamentary system was, to imagine that, under the Republic, the Assembly was omnipotent; an enormous error, even under the Republic. The nation alone is omnipotent; the Assembly is only a power, and cannot be a sovereignty.

XXIII.

France, supreme as she was at the election of the 21st December; the executive power committed to the Emperor, with the exercise of sovereignty; unity,—the essential basis of authority and liberty,—constituting itself with the concurrence of all the great bodies of the state; the assembly of repre-

sentatives, the senate, the magistracy, the army, the administration to help him, to strengthen him, to appease and moderate him, if necessary:—France, re-assured, guided, and protected in her institutions, in which she will feel herself restored to her moral and physical existence; parties, converted rather than vanquished, disappearing and uniting with the mass of the nation, which claims for itself that courage and talent they so uselessly squander in the pursuit of theories; religion respected; education circulated and purified; administration simplified; the taxes equitably distributed; peace assured, without humiliation or relinquishment; the spirit of progress wisely regulated, and boldly carried out: in a word, French civilisation,—that old civilisation which has enriched and enlightened the world,—retaking its regular course, and giving as much happiness to France, under Louis Napoleon Bonaparte, as it shed of glory, grandeur, and brilliancy under the kings and under the chiefs who have been, in turns, her apostles, soldiers, or heroes: this is what may be expected from a loyal application of the new Constitution! May God grant that this law, which has been given to France, may be applied with that spirit of justice and wisdom which alone can impress durability on the works of men! Before writing the laws of his country, Solon said, "I swear to be just." Solon was just, indeed, and he is immortal.

THE TWO EMPIRES.

NEVER was the mission of the Emperor Napoleon I. better defined than in the admirable words of his heir: "The Emperor was the mediator between two hostile ages; he terminated the ancient *regime* by establishing the good it contained; he killed the revolutionary spirit by everywhere promoting the real benefits of the revolution." This passage in the memorable discourse of Lyons, is one of those that have the most deeply impressed themselves on public opinion. It lightens up a whole epoch, whose real meaning is still misunderstood by a certain class of reasoners. It exhibits the Emperor as a great conqueror, and, at the same time, a great civiliser; a great genius of war, and, at the same time, the genius of peace and government. The Empire, in fact, was something more than what it was called, a sublime epic poem. It was likewise the result of a long-working of the human mind, and the definite advent in our institutions of the Christian principle of civil equality, reconciled and amalgamated with the principle of authority. The hero who led on our soldiers in those immortal campaigns, in which genius and courage constantly triumphed over force and numbers, was, at the same time, the

restorer of religion and authority: in a word, he was the legislator of that imperishable code in which law, justice, and liberty have been ratified by such stable guarantees as no revolution has been able to shake.

The great statesman was for a time eclipsed by the great warrior. The generation that followed that of the Empire was too much dazzled to see clearly into that epoch. It saw nothing but its glory, and did not duly appreciate its works. The squadrons that pass along, the standards that float, the cannons that roar, the victories that resound, the thrones that crumble to dust, the national limits that change, the world that is staggered: all these prodigies, all these marvels, occupy and absorb for a long time the imagination of a people. Whilst recounting such events, history becomes as popular as a legend. It is only at long intervals that she presents correctly all her various aspects, and becomes impartial and clear as truth.

The justice of history will never be tired of the Napoleon of war and battles: this justice will be as everlasting as his glory. We believe it has scarcely begun for the Napoleon of the Civil Code and of the Concordat, the great reformer, who, according to the expression in the discourse at Lyons, was the mediator between two antagonistic ages.

Each of these antagonistic ages brought with it its truth—the one was, authority in tradition; the other, equality in revolution.

Authority in tradition was a sort of mystical dogma, without certainty, without settlement, which taught us to derive, not human power, which is always divine in its principle, but the perishable, changeable, and physical form of this power from God himself, as if God could be identified with insti-

tutions that are only the accidental forms of society which He directs. Napoleon separated the principle of authority from this mysticism; he replaced it on its immovable basis,—that of law. He proclaimed the sovereignty of the enfranchised nation; and he was but the instrument and the rule of that sovereignty personified in himself upon the throne.

Equality in revolution was but an Utopia, exaggerated to madness. It had been invoked to overthrow everything. Napoleon invoked it only to organise everything. He released it, by the power of his genius, from the false philosophy that perverted it, and introduced it boldly and wisely within the laws, by assimilating it to the customs and wants of society.

This was his work! He founded authority upon law; he established equality in justice; he borrowed from the ancient system what was required; he availed himself of everything that was true in the Revolution; and, by this double association, he reconciled together two antagonistic ages. He was the founder of modern civilisation.

Wonderful to tell, it is the same work his nephew is accomplishing to-day; and this is why he is his heir, far more to continue his mission than to perpetuate his name! Now, as at the end of the last century, France has escaped a most awful crisis. In what position was the nation before the 2nd December? All was in collision; everything overwhelmed; all was in confusion. Society was sick at heart; the notions of right and wrong were dimmed; immorality knew no bounds; parties were ready to tear each other to pieces, and anarchy, emerging from this horrible chaos, was about to stalk abroad. Where is the truth? Where the error? Where is the law? Where the power? No man can tell. The [illegible] its hesitate the wisest

heads are at fault. Statesmen have sunk into rhetoricians. It appeared as if the nation were struck with vertigo and blindness.

Louis Napoleon, inflexible as conscience, firm and resolute, suddenly starts up, and, by the most daring impromptu that history records, dissolves parties, demolishes intrigues, confounds conspirators, and strangles anarchy before she had time even to form her ranks out of those detestable bands of pillagers and assassins, who appeared only at certain points of France, dishonouring themselves by the most brutal and cowardly excesses, and which had scarcely been committed before they were repressed. The revolutionary spirit was again extinguished, therefore, by the nephew, as it had been half a century before by the uncle. But now, as then, the benefits of the Revolution were destined to triumph only the more surely. What, in fact, has been the policy of Louis Napoleon since the 2nd December, unless the regular, practical, and measured application of all that was true and equitable in the Revolution of 1789? We say it in all sincerity, we do not believe that any government has done so much as his for the moral and physical improvement of the people. Much has been said about democracy for some years since. If this word is not an anachronism and a deception; if it means, as we believe it does, progress, civilisation, unity, justice, and reconcilement; Louis Napoleon is the actual founder of French democracy. That which the Emperor had organised in his institutions, his heir will realise in his acts. Those great institutions of government, finance, and policy, belonging to the Empire, which time has perfected and custom aggrandised, may now bear their fruits. They are wide and spacious enough to comprehend the whole people. They offer to all parties an

honourable asylum. They allow all men of courage and intel ligence to serve their country, without sacrifice or humiliation. They are the most certain guarantees of national independence, of the strength of authority, and of the might of progress: they are, in a word, the links that connect ancient with modern France, by organising the greatness of power in conformity with the greatness of the people.

This is the Empire! This imperishable type in history may reproduce itself, perfected and improved in future days. It may be reproduced with its advantages, and without its inconveniences. Authority, without the abuse of force; the greatness of France, without the perils of war; the unity of power, without the exaggeration of government; protection and justice for all,—that will be its scheme. This is the declaration Louis Napoleon drew up, when he said at Lyons: "The faithful servant of my country, I aspire only to one object, to reconstitute in the nation, disturbed by so many Utopias, a peace based upon the reconciliation of parties, upon the inflexible principles of authority, of morality, and love of the laborious and suffering classes, and of the national honour."

The Empire, thus understood, can be an object of alarm to no one. It is a guarantee of prosperity to France, and of security to Europe; it shakes nothing,—it consolidates everything. It is not an accident in political life, but a result in the existence of a people. It is this Empire which millions of men lauded with their acclamations a few days ago, and which millions of voices approved with an ardour that is, perhaps, without any example in history. Do not be astonished by it. The people have an admirable instinct of government, which may sometimes be misled, but which cannot be perverted.

It knows better than the most distinguished statesman where the conditions of its safety and its greatness are to be found.

In 1848, at the very moment Socialism overflowed its banks, the people laughed at the arrogance of those who wished to deliver up the government of the country to the favourites of revolutionary popularity. It raised the nephew of the Emperor to the Presidency of the Republic. In its eyes, already that name of Bonaparte seemed to show force, stability, glory, futurity; it took up the name of that man, as the image and thought of an institution of which it was the personification.

The name alone suffices not for this unselfish pride of the people, which is nothing more than a national ambition to see its own triumphs secured in the glory of the power at its head. Having asked for a Bonaparte, they now desire an Emperor. It is the same propelling instinct; it is the same predominating thought. The Empire, for the people, is not simply the coronation of a man and the restoration of a dynasty; it is, above all, France elevated to her highest power, and recovering once more, in the fruitful contest of civilisation, and in the pacific conquests of labour, that sovereignty of genius which was to Louis XIV. the heir-loom of the past, and which Napoleon has made the right and the necessity of the future.

THE PROGRAMME OF THE EMPIRE.

According to the remark of the Cardinal-Archbishop of Bordeaux, that city, so full of recollections, has just had a high honour conferred on it,—for it is Bordeaux which will give her name to one of the most important acts which our epoch will hand down to the judgment of history.

The declaration which Prince Louis Napoleon made at Bordeaux, in answer to the wishes and sentiments expressed by that magnificent city, is more than a discourse,—it is the programme of the Empire. Let us begin by stating one of the important results of this discourse. The Empire is accepted as a glorious inheritance and as a great duty by Louis Napoleon, after being demanded and acclaimed by all France as a necessity of her future prosperity, the result of her civilisation, and a condition of her political and moral power.

For the first time since his departure from Paris, the Prince broke through the reserve which he had resolved to maintain. Before explaining himself, he listened long and attentively; he listened to the voice of public opinion, ex-

pressed by all classes,—by the prelates, by the magistrates, by the army, by the owners of the soil, by the cultivators, by the workmen,—in fact, by the people of all conditions, and in all parts of the country, in the north as in the south, in the departments hitherto the most hostile to government, wherever people think or work, wherever vital instinct, or sentiment, or love of country prevails. All that he had heard since he left his palace, in quitting the capital, and on his passsge from one extremity of the land to the other, was calculated to dazzle and hurry him on.

He remained calm, simple, and modest; he overcame and mastered, by his self-possession, all the intoxications of fortune and the triumphs of popularity; he compressed beneath his rigid patriotism the throes of the most natural ambition, and when his heart was the most touched his reason remained firm and attentive. "I know not," said he, at Lyons, "under what title I may be able to render the most useful services." But, after so many evidences, as spontaneous as they were decisive, hesitation was no longer possible; and, yielding at last to these irresistible wishes, the noble liberator of society and of European civilisation responded to the acclamations, not only of Bordeaux, but of every town he had passed through, by an absolute and formal declaration.

"*L'Empire est fait!*"—the Empire is come! M. Thiers had exclaimed from the tribune. That celebrated phrase is now found true; but in a totally new and different sense, and one which he had not foreseen. It is come with the free will of France; by a burst of gratitude for the man who has saved her; and by her admiration for the name that has glorified her; and for the incomparable genius which rescued

modern society from the ruins of the old world. This has been accomplished by the respect for that authority which is born again in our souls, and of which it is at once the fruit and the seed; it has been accomplished by the innate sense of the grandeur of the country, of which it is the symbol by the glories it reminds us of; it has been accomplished, in fine, by one of those prodigious movements of opinion that do not guide themselves, and whose mysterious impulse, like the hand of Providence, is irresistible to snatch nations from the passions that destroy them, and to conduct them to those fortunes by which they are saved. There is a wide interval between that Empire which is only the result of social action, and which France ordained, before it was accepted by Louis Napoleon, and that other Empire taken by surprise, and as it were, by chance, announced by M. Thiers. In vain do we seek, on that immense stage which is now being erected to inaugurate one of the greatest acts of history, for those profligate pretorians, whom, one day, a general was found daring enough to compare to those heroic soldiers who have shed their blood in society's defence. We see here the hand of the people raising the country from its degradation, and the hand of God blessing their noble endeavours. We see here, likewise, a man who is not ambitious, not a pretender, but a clear-sighted legislator, a founder of institutions and governments, and who rises to the greatness of his destiny, much less by the grandeur of his name than by that of his character and wisdom. Before accepting the Empire from the free and regular vote of the nation, Louis Napoleon draws up his programme. He does not follow the example of those improvident authors, who never write their preface until they have finished their book. He

knows well what he desires, and where he is going; he has his thought, his principle, and his object. Before constructing the the edifice, he shows the plan. We have the programme of the Empire before the Emperor is proclaimed. What is the Empire, then? Is it brute force? Is it war? Is it the enslavement of the human mind? Is it the shrinking of a people into the dimensions of a single man? Is it the conquest of nations and thrones? Does France, then, contemplate the preparation for one of those sublime efforts which great perils demand, and great patriotism inspires? Does Europe intend to put herself in motion to protect her frontiers, or to menace ours? Is our fleet ready to sail for Egypt, and our armies to march upon the Pyrennees, or upon the Rhine? Is agriculture, is commerce, is labour to be sacrificed to the chances of war? That immense activity of production, of consumption, of barter, to which canals and railroads every day contribute new means and agencies; that busy stimulus of interests and intelligence, which constitute the riches, the dignity, the liberty of nations,—are all these to be stopped on a sudden by the shock of armies, and the roar of battle? In a word, what means Louis Napoleon? Does he intend to imitate his uncle, or to continue his system? Will he seek in the dust for the footstep of the conqueror, or revive his genius of organisation? Is he a great name only, or great as a man?

The programme of the Empire, which Louis Napoleon has dated from Bordeaux, answers these queries, and resolves the question for France and for Europe.

"The Empire is peace, without sacrificing French interests!" The Empire implies feasible progress, without Utopian fancies, and without rashness or precipitation! The Empire is

the moral and physical improvement of the labouring and suffering classes, without exaggerated hopes, or after-disappointment. The Empire implies religion, uniting the salutary influence of its divine precepts upon society, to make men respect what is divine, and to check social errors! The Empire is the reconcilement of parties within the commonweal of a common country, which contains and signifies everything! The Empire, in a word, is not the mockery of the past, but the recognition of the future; directed, ennobled, and enriched by all that history has transmitted to us, by all that innovation has created, by all the new improvements which time and experience bestow upon civilised man! Such is the Empire as Louis Napoleon has defined it in that admirable discourse, which will form a page in history! And here we appeal to all high-minded men, to every generous spirit. This programme, which exhibits nothing of common-place, no selfish calculations; where all is living and genuine, because all is spontaneous and true; this programme—does it not represent exactly the idea that each individual had conceived in his mind? Whatever our opinions may be, whether republican, Legitimist, or Orleanist, have we not desired, every one of us, a government superior even to our own wishes, more national than our party feelings—a government as noble as France, as firm as rectitude, resolved to do good, inflexible in what is true and just, without prejudices, or rancour, or antipathies; and, placing itself with energy at the head of the nation, to make use of all its powers, and to realise all its hopes? Of this government we have the programme before us. Time will demonstrate whether we shall enjoy the reality in the Empire.

The hour appointed by the decision of France has already

struck. Eight millions of votes have ratified the legal right of Napoleon the Third! The Emperor reigns at the Tuileries! May the happy fortunes of our dear country be established! God, who protects her, will inspire the man, who, after having had courage enough to govern, will have, we believe, virtue enough to reign.

CAN THE EMPIRE LEAD TO WAR?

THE Empire is proclaimed! We have already said what it will be relatively to France, to the civilised world, to religion, and to society. Let us examine what it will be relatively to Europe. There is a word which has long been uppermost in people's minds, whenever mention was made of the Empire; a word, which fortunately is no longer uttered aloud since the memorable discourse at Bordeaux, but which has been whispered about for the last few days as a secret alarm, and as the rumour of a great European crisis, which is to make Europe tremble.

That word is—WAR!

Shall we go to war? Is a new treaty of Pilnitz about to be signed against France? Is Europe on the eve of a general conflagration? Are we in 1804? Let us not fear to ask these questions. We can resolve them, not alone by arguments, but by facts. Two things are necessary to bring on a war; namely, a cause and an object.

What then is the cause, and what the object? Does any one want to alter the map of the world? Is there any royal inheritance for two crowns to contest? Is there any authority

to be protected on the continent or the ocean? Does England wish to rule in Egypt? Does Russia wish to annex Turkey? Is Prussia already advancing upon Neufchâtel? Does Austria contemplate our expulsion from Rome? No! Nothing of the sort is visible on the horizon; perfect tranquillity pervades every place. No ambition is abroad. The European governments, all more or less agitated by the storm which has lately passed over the nations, only desire to live at peace, preserving their right inviolable, and their power secure.

Why, then, should Europe dream of going to war? We know not what future fate God may decree to our country; but, whatever that destiny may be, we believe it necessary to disengage it from certain fears and certain forebodings. No! It is impossible France can apprehend an aggression on the part of Europe, on account of the legitimate exercise of her sovereignty. Whatever that sovereignty may determine, it will be held sacred by foreign nations. Whether she confirm the Republic or repudiate it; whether she assumes the emblem of the eagle or the lily to designate her government; she has no account to give to any one, and none will have the audacity to demand it. No treaty can avail against the imprescriptible maxims of the independence and dignity of a people.

Besides, could Europe seriously appeal to the treaties of 1815 against France, on account of the use she may one day or other think fit, for such or such a cause, to make of her right of sovereignty? What, then, is the political value of these famous treaties? To appreciate it seriously we must go back to the circumstances which led to their adoption, and the epoch which marks their character. At that time Europe was recovering from a long commotion; all its old landmarks had been

confused by the French Revolution and by the Empire. Napoleon had altered frontiers, dethroned dynasties, appointed kings, distributed nations, and dealt with the territories and states under his control as if they had been chessmen, to be moved about as he pleased. Ancient rights had disappeared; nothing remained but the right of the most powerful and of the glory of France, embodied in one man.

When the giant fell under the efforts of all his enemies united, and beneath the exhaustion of France herself, wearied with glory, there rose up against him an immense re-action, made up of all the strength, of all the claims, and of all the renown that he had humbled, uprooted, and overthrown. To the general war, of which he was the hero, succeeded the universal confederated monarchy, of which the treaties of 1815 were the title. The kings, who had been urged on by the common bond of their policy, joined together in the common assertion of their interests. It was agreed that they should lend each other mutual aid and assistance, and that, if the rights of one amongst them should be threatened, he should forthwith be protected by all the rest.

When the Restoration undertook, on its own account and on that of Europe, to re-establish Ferdinand VII. at the Escurial, it only acted in strict conformity with the treaties of 1815. The war of Spain was not only a French and Bourbon cause; it was, more than all, a monarchic war.

It is evident that, at that period, had the widow of Napoleon thrown off with scorn her ducal coronet, and had been enterprising enough to go and claim in France the imperial crown for her son, and had possessed sufficient influence and good fortune to succeed, a third coalition, and a third invasion would

have become inevitable. Europe, re-instated in her monarchical integrity, could not have suffered that name of Bonaparte to revive, which was to them both a terror and a warning. An inevitable Waterloo must follow in the train of each "Return from Elba."

But does that monarchical integrity which Europe had re-established by the treaties of 1815 exist at present? Is the heir of Louis XVIII. at the Tuileries? Has Belgium remained under the sceptre of the Nassaus? Has the Salic law been respected in Spain? By what right, then, could you, in a new condition of things, exact from France any respect for the treaties of 1815, when you have abandoned them, both in principle and spirit?

What! The French monarchy has twice fallen—in 1830 and in 1848; the first time in its hereditary, and the second in its constitutional right—and you stood still!

What! Belgium revolted against her sovereign; she broke the link that united her to Holland; she chose for herself a King, and whatever institutions she pleased—and you stood still!

What! Spain changed her form of government; she effected in 1833 what she was prevented from doing in 1823; she has driven into exile a dynasty and a right; she took a crown from the trembling hand of a dying king, to place it, by the hand of a mother, and the snare of a revolution, upon the brow of an infant—and again you stood still!

You have allowed treaties to be torn up, and now you want to sew the shreds together; to put France under an interdict, and her sovereignty in bondage. You do not wish this: you cannot wish it!

Europe wishes not to make war; her wisdom forbids her.

Europe wishes not to make war; her interest restrains her. She will not—she cannot do it. This is our double guarantee of peace.

And, indeed, had Europe wished, and been able to go to war, she would not have waited up to this time to have enforced respect to the treaties of 1815.

She would have done so in 1830, when the ancient monarchy tottered down; when Belgium rose; when Poland revolted; and when Italy was reviving.

She would have done so in 1848, when the constitutional monarchies themselves disappeared; when the mob made a bonfire of the throne on the Place de la Bastille, and when the Republic, instituted at the Hôtel de Ville, appeared from its balcony, to kings as a warning, and to nations as a hope.

Europe did not declare war at these two memorable periods of staggering monarchy, which were likewise the shock of social institutions. She preserved the attitude of expectation and prudence; she did not choose to set the world on fire, and hazard all at once upon one last stake. She has thus given proof of her superior wisdom. History will bear witness to and glorify this conduct, which has saved social order and the civilised world.

Certainly, had Europe desired or been able to make war, the occasion was not wanting at these two epochs, above all in 1848. Never was a more righteous pretext afforded to her suspicion. Need we recall to mind that M. Ledru-Rollin governed at the Hôtel de Ville, that M. Louis Blanc harangued at the Luxembourg; that the clubs were steeped in gall and animosity; that the Poles, the Italians, the Germans, publicly organised insurrections; that all Paris resembled a camp, from which revolution prepared to rush out upon the world to rouse

it to revolt? Need we recall that slip of *Risquons-Tout*, which betrayed the hand of a member of the government as the accomplice of a base attack upon an allied people? Europe remained immovable, with reversed arms, before this state of things. She waited till France, recovering her good sense and recognising her own interest, should herself stop these excesses and these follies. As to the treaties of 1815, they were never alluded to. It was then a very different matter from the letter of a treaty,—the life and safety of nations was at stake!

War is revolution: that is what renders war impossible in Europe. Every European government has in itself some latent cause of ruin, which ought to serve as a motive of caution. Austria is placed between Italy and Hungary; Prussia spreads upon the provinces of the Rhine; Russia has a Poland lashed to its sides, according to the fine expression of M. Berryer; and England is burdened with the affliction and wrongs of Ireland. It is peace alone that can keep these suffering nations from breaking out, and obeying their aspirations for liberty. The first cannon fired on the Rhine would be the signal for them to break the chains of their servitude, and we should inevitably see the spirit of France brought into collision with the spirit of Europe.

France does do not wish to play this desperate game. God preserve us from proving, at such a cost, the invincible power of the new rights of which she has raised the standard! Violent propagandism has served its time. It is no longer by victories that France ought to dazzle nations; it is by her institutions, by that progress at the head of which she marches, that she ought to captivate and allure them.

We are certain the Emperor Napoleon, who governs France, has no other ambition

After a Napoleon of Conquest there is only room for a Napoleon of Peace. Europe assuredly comprehends this already, and knows that in this great name, which she again beholds at the pinnacle of power, after a long eclipse, nothing is implied but the sovereignty of a great people, which, willing to be respected by all, intends hostility to none.

POLITICAL THOUGHTS

OF

THE EMPEROR NAPOLEON III.

I.

He who enjoys the glory of being the chief of the French nation, has one infallible means of doing good, which is—the will to do it.

II.

That which gives an irresistible force, even to the humblest of mortals, is to have a great object to attain, and a great cause to defend.

III.

In the present day it is still to good faith and to conciliation we must appeal: to good faith, which supports us and permits us

to endure the difficulties of the hour; to conciliation, which augments our strength and leads us, under trials, to hope for better times.

IV.

It is time for good men to take courage and for the unprincipled to tremble.

V.

Every day proves to me that my sincerest, my most devoted friends are not in palaces, they live under the thatch; they are not to be found under gilded roofs, they are in the workshops, in the fields.

VI.

The best way to withdraw all influence from what is dangerous and false, is to encourage that which is truly good and useful.

VII.

The noblest and most deserving object of an exalted mind is not to seek, when in power, by what expedients to render it perpetual, but to watch continually over the means to consolidate, for the advantage of all, the principles of authority and morality, which defy the passions of men and the instability of political institutions.

VIII.

At the commencement of the seventeenth century, it was not for the triumph of the insane ideas of a few fanatics, taking the Bible for their text, and to justify their follies, that the English struggled for forty years, but it was to secure their own religion, and for the triumph of their own liberty.

So, after '89, it was not for the sake of the ideas of Babœuf, or other similar fanatics, that society was overturned, but it was done for the abolition of privileges, for the division of property, for equality in the eye of the law, for the admission of all men to public offices.

Well! again at this day, too, it is not for the adoption of inapplicable theories, or imaginary advantages, that the Revolution was accomplished, but to form a government, which, being the result of the will of all, may be better acquainted with the wants of the people, and may conduct the business of the country without prepossessions in favour of any one royal family.

Our duty, therefore, is to distinguish between the false and the true ideas which spring from a revolution; and, after that judgment has been made, to defend the one, and courageously oppose the other.

IX.

Societies do not change their condition at the caprice of any man's ambition: forms may alter, but the substance remains. Notwithstanding the stormy struggles succeeding each other since 1815, society is still strong under the shelter of the

broad institutions founded by the Consulate and the Empire. Dynasties and charters have passed away; but what has survived and still saves us is religion, the constitution of justice, and the organization of the army and of government.

X.

Let us acknowledge it, frankly. It is great principles, the nobler passions, such as loyalty and disinterestedness, that save society, and not the calculations of power and chance.

XI.

Repose has its danger. Perils unite men; security divides them.

XII.

France will neither allow the return of the old system, whatever the form of its disguise, nor the trial of theories as dangerous as they are impracticable. It is because I am the most natural adversary of both that she has placed her confidence in me.

XIII.

Governments that succeed to revolution have the ungrateful task of beginning with restraint, in order afterwards to improve; to put down fallacious hopes, and so replace, by the language of cool reason, the disorderly accents of passion.

XIV.

Patriotism is recognised like the true mother in a celebrated judgment. You remember those two women, both claiming the same infant; by what sign do we perceive the feelings of the real mother? By the renunciation of her rights, which the peril of a loved being wrings from her. Let not the parties that divide France forget this sublime lesson; I myself will remember it, if required. But, on the other hand, if presumptuous claims revive, and threaten to molest the repose of France, I shall know how to render them nugratory, by again invoking the sovereignty of the people, for I yield to no man the right to call himself more her representative than I am.

XV.

It is encouraging to reflect that, in extreme dangers, Providence often reserves to one alone to be the instrument of safety to all; and sometimes chooses that single instrument from the weaker sex, as if to prove more strongly, by its feebleness, the empire of the soul over human affairs, and show that a cause cannot be lost if, to guide it, there is a fervent faith, an inspired devotedness, and deep convictions.

Thus, in the fifteenth century, at a few years' distance, two obscure women, but each of them animated by the sacred fire, Jeanne d'Arc and Jeanne Hachette, appeared at the most desperate conjuncture each to fulfil a sacred mission.

The one attains the miraculous glory of delivering France from a foreign yoke.

The other inflicts the shame of a retreat on a prince, who, in spite of his splendour and power, was but a rebel, a fomentor of civil war.

And yet, in what did their heroism consist? All they did was, to indicate to Frenchmen the road of honour and duty, and to march at their head.

XVI.

Physical interests increase solely by the right direction of moral interests. It is the soul conducts the body; consequently, a government would strangely deceive itself which based its politics upon avarice, selfishness, and fear.

XVII.

The title I most desire is that of an honest man.
I know nothing superior to duty.

XVIII.

Why did the Emperor, in spite of the war, cover France with those imperishable works which strike us at every step? It was because, independently of his genius, he came at a moment when the nation, tired of revolutions, gave him the power necessary to crush anarchy, oppose the factions, and make the interests of the country triumphant by glory abroad, and by vigorous stimulus at home.

XIX.

To government it belongs to establish and propagate good principles of political economy, to encourage, to protect, to honour the industry of France. It ought to be the promoter of whatever tends to elevate the condition of the people; but the greatest benefit it can confer, and one from which all others are derived, is, to establish a good administration, which creates confidence, and gives assurance for the future. Perhaps the greatest danger of modern times proceeds from that false opinion, inculcated in men's minds, that a government can do everything, and that every system, of whatever character, is bound to acquiesce in every appeal, and to remedy every evil. Improvements do not spring up at once; they emanate from those which preceded them. Like the human race, they have a gradual descent, which allows us to measure the extent and scope of possible progress, and to distinguish it from unsubstantial theories.

XX.

The more we advance, the more (as the Emperor said), the trades become arts, and luxury itself becomes useful, a first condition of our existence. But this luxury, which, by the attractions of agreeable products, draws the superfluity of the rich to reward the labour of the poor, prospers only when agriculture, sharing in the same prosperity, augments the fundamental riches of the country, and multiplies consumers.

XXI.

In spite of the sophistries daily spread abroad to mislead the people, there is an irrefutable fact, which in England, in America, in Switzerland, has given the most advantageous results, that is, to set production free, and to tax consumption only. The riches of a country are like a river, if we take the waters from their spring we dry it up; if we take them, on the contrary, where the current has swollen the river, we may turn off a large mass without weakening its volume.

XXII.

Wherever I can, indeed, I endeavour to diffuse religious ideas, the most sublime of all, since they guide us in prosperity and console in adversity. My government, I say it with pride, is one of the few that have supported religion for herself alone; it supports it, not as a political organ, not to flatter a party, but solely from inward belief, from the love of good which it inspires, as well as of the truths it communicates.

XXIII.

A suspicious and distrustful spirit induces certain persons to say to themselves, the Empire is war! I tell you the Empire is peace! It is peace, because France desires it; and when France is satisfied, the world is tranquil. Glory is handed down by right of inheritance, but war is not. Did the princes who

justly prided themselves upon being the grandsons of Louis XIV. re-commence his wars?

War is not made for pleasure, it is made from necessity; and in these times of transition, where on all sides, among so many elements of prosperity, spring up so many causes of ruin, it may be said with truth, "Woe be to him who shall give the first signal in Europe of a collision of which the consequences would be incalculable!

XXIV.

The Emperor was the mediator between two antagonistic ages. He destroyed the old system, by re-establishing all the good which that system contained; he destroyed the revolutionary spirit, by everywhere rendering triumphant the benefits of the Revolution. This is the reason why those who overthrew him had soon reason to deplore their triumph. As to those who defended him, need I recall how deeply they have bewailed his fall?

APPENDIX.

I.

This speech, delivered by Louis Napoleon in the Court of Peers, on the 28th September, 1840, was not the vindication of a prisoner, but the manifesto of a pretender. Whilst re-perusing this address at present, we are struck with the consistency between the conduct and designs exhibited in the life of the man whose character we have just examined in this book. The Emperor Napoleon III. has nothing to disown in the language of the pretender, whom fortune's vicissitudes were to place at the bar of a political court of law, before the revulsion of opinion should raise him to his uncle's throne.

"For the first time in my life, I am permitted to raise my voice in France, and to speak freely to Frenchmen.

"In spite of the guards who surround me, in spite of the charges I have just heard, full of the early recollections of my childhood, and seeing myself within the walls of the Senate, in the midst of you, gentlemen, whom I know, I cannot believe that this is the place in which to justify myself, or that you can be my judges. An opportunity is offered me to explain to my fellow-citizens my conduct, my purposes, my projects; what I think, and what I am.

"Devoid of pride as well as weakness, if I remind you of the rights deposited in the hands of my family by the French

people, I do so to declare the duties which these rights impose upon all.

"For fifty years that the principle of the people's sovereignty has been formally established in France, by the most powerful revolution the world has ever seen, the will of the nation has never been so solemnly proclaimed, nor ratified by so large a number of independent votes, as for the adoption of the constitutions of the Empire.

"The nation has never abolished this great act of its supremacy, and, as the Emperor said: 'Whatever is done without her concurrence is unlawful.'

"However, beware how you believe that, yielding to the impulse of personal ambition, I wished to attempt the restoration of the Empire in France. The lessons I have been taught were too exalted; the examples amongst which I have lived have been too noble for this.

"I am the son of a father who came down from the throne, without regret, the day he considered it hopeless to reconcile the interests of France with those of the people he had been called upon to govern.

"The Emperor, my uncle, abdicated the Empire rather than acknowledge by treaty the restricted frontiers, which have exposed France to those contemptuous threats which the foreigner now indulges in. Not a day have I lived without remembering the lessons thus taught. The undeserved and cruel proscription which, for twenty-five years, has bandied me about from the steps of the throne on which I was born to the prison I have this moment quitted, has failed either to provoke or to weary me; it could not make me a stranger for a single day to the glory, the rights, the

interests of France. My conduct, as well as my principles, testify to this.

"When, in 1830, the people conquered, and resumed their supremacy, I thought that the day after the victory would be as faithful as the victory itself, and that the destiny of France was established for ever; but the country has had the mournful experience of the last ten years. It appeared, therefore, to me, that the vote of four millions of citizens, which had raised up my family, laid us all under the obligation of at least making an appeal to the people, and ascertaining their desire; it even seemed to me that if, in the national congress I intended to call together, a few claims might be listened to, I should be entitled to revive there the brilliant memorials of the Empire; to speak of the Emperor's eldest brother, of that virtuous man, who, prior to me, is his worthy heir; and to compare this France, now so weak, and whose name was not mentioned in the recent congress of kings, with the France of that time, at home so strong, abroad so powerful and so much respected. The people would have decided between a republic or a monarchy, an empire or a kingdom. The end of our sufferings, the term of our disputes, depend on their free decision.

"As for my enterprise, I tell you again, I had no accomplice. I alone settled everything; none knew beforehand either my projects, or my means, or my hopes. If I am guilty to any one, it is to my friends alone. Still, let them not charge me with having wantonly imposed on such courage and personal attachment as theirs. They will understand the honourable and prudent motives which will not allow me to reveal, even to themselves, how powerful and widely extended were the grounds on which my hopes of success were built.

"One word more, and I have done. I stand here to represent a principle, a cause, and a defeat. That principle is the people's supremacy; that cause is the Empire; that defeat, Waterloo. You have acknowledged that principle; you have served under that cause; you wish to avenge that defeat. No; between you and me there is no disagreement, nor will I believe that I can be sacrificed for the treachery of others.

"Representative of a political cause, I cannot recognise as the umpire of my designs and actions a political jurisdiction. Your formalities do not deceive any man. In the struggle now at hand there is the victor on one side, and on the other the party subdued. If you are the partizans of the victor I can expect no justice from you, and I will have none of your clemency." (*Long-continued excitement.*)

II.

THE ADDRESS OF THE PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC TO THE OFFICERS OF THE ARMY OF PARIS, ON THE 10TH OF NOVEMBER, 1851.

"GENTLEMEN,

"When I receive the officers of the different regiments of the army, who succeed each other in the garrison of Paris, I congratulate myself on seeing them animated by that military spirit which constituted our glory, and which now renders us secure. I shall not, therefore, speak to you either of your duties or of discipline. As for your duties, you have always fulfilled them with honour, whether on the soil of France, or the African territory, and your discipline has ever been kept perfect through the most arduous trials. I trust that these trials will not return; but, should the gravity of events bring them back, and oblige me to appeal to your fidelity, I am sure it will not desert me; because you know I would ask nothing of you but what consists with my right, acknowledged by the Constitution, with military honour, and with the interests of our country; because I placed at your head men who enjoy my confidence and deserve yours; and because, if ever the day of peril should come, I would not act like the governments which have preceded me, I would not say: 'March, and I will follow you!' But I would say: 'I will march, follow me!'"

III.

SPEECH OF THE PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC TO THE REPRESENTATIVES OF FRENCH INDUSTRY.

"GENTLEMEN,

"There are formalities which, owing to the feelings they elicit, and the reflections they produce, are something better than empty show. I cannot but feel a certain pleasure, and a certain pride as a Frenchman, when I see before me the honourable men who, at the cost of so many pains and so much expense, have creditably maintained abroad the reputation of our arts, our manufactures, and our science.

"I have already paid a just tribute to the great idea which presided over the Great Exhibition in London; yet, when about to crown your success with a national reward, how can I forget that all these many marvels of industry were begun amidst a continual social agitation, caused by fear for the present, and by sinister signs of the future? And, whilst I reflected on the obstacles you had to surmount, I said to myself: 'How great this nation would be, if they would but let her live in quiet.'

"And, truly, it was when our credit had scarcely begun to revive; it was when, deluded by a hell-born error, our workingmen were continually goaded to dry up the very springs of labour; it was when a sort of insanity, under the cloak of philanthropy, actually diverted men's minds from their regular

employments, to plunge them into speculative theories; then it was you showed the world those productions, which one would have thought could have been created only amidst a calm and durable state of things.

"In presence, therefore, of these unhoped for results, I cannot help repeating: How great the French Republic would be, if she were allowed to mind her own affairs, and to reform her institutions, instead of being continually agitated, on one side by the false notions of demagogues, on the other by monarchical illusions!

"Do the nations of demagogues promulgate a truth? No; they diffuse nothing throughout the land but error and falsehood. Alarm precedes, deception follows them; and what it costs to suppress them has to be withdrawn from the most urgent improvements for the relief of poverty.

"As for monarchical illusions, if they do not expose us to the same perils, they equally impede our progress and all serious occupation. Instead of advancing, we contend. We meet with men, once the sanguine supporters of the royal prerogative, who turn conventionists in order to thwart the power proceeding from popular election. We meet with those who have most suffered by, and most deplored, revolutions, urging on another, merely to escape from obeying the national will, and prevent that movement, which is a social transformation, from taking its peaceful course.

"These efforts will be fruitless. Whatever is blended with the necessity of the time must be accomplished. The useless, alone, cannot survive. This ceremony is another proof that, although certain institutions perish for ever, those, on the other hand, which agree with the manners, the opinions, and the requirements of the

age, defy alike the assaults of the envious and the obloquy of the morose.

"Sons of that regenerated society which destroyed old privileges, and declared civil and political equality as their fundamental principle, you all of you feel nevertheless, proper pride in being appointed Knights of the Legion of Honour. The reason is, that, like all created at that period, this was an institution adapted to the opinions of the country, and in harmony with the spirit of the age. Far from serving, like others, to deepen the lines of demarcation, it obliterates them, by placing all men who distinguish themselves on the same line, whatever their rank or profession may be.

"Receive, therefore, these crosses of the Legion of Honour, which, by the great idea of its founder, are designed to honour industry as much as valour, and valour as much as science.

"Before we separate, gentlemen, let me stimulate you to new endeavours. Be fearless in your enterprises; they will prevent a want of employment during winter. Fear not for the future. Happen what may, peace shall be maintained. A government resting for support on the whole mass of the nation, having no other purpose than the public welfare, and animated by that fervent faith which assuredly must be your own guide, even where no road has yet been opened to your skill,—this government, I say, will know how to fulfil its duty, for it comprehends both the right which comes from the people, and the power which emanates from God."

IV.

IN THE NAME OF THE FRENCH PEOPLE

The President of the Republic decrees :—

"ART. 1.—The National Assembly is dissolved.

"ART. 2.—Universal Suffrage is restored. The law of the 31st May is annulled.

"ART. 3.—The French people are to assemble in their *Comitia* from the 14th December to the 21st of the same month.

"ART. 4.—Martial law is declared within the range of the first military division.

"ART. 5.—The Council of State is dissolved.

"ART. 6.—The Minister of the Interior is charged with the execution of the present decree.

"Done at the Palace of the Elysée, 2nd December, 1851,

"LOUIS NAPOLEON BONAPARTE."

"DE MORNY,

"*Minister of the Interior.*"

V.

PROCLAMATION OF THE PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC.

APPEAL TO THE PEOPLE.

"FRENCHMEN!

"The present state of things can no longer continue. Every succeeding day aggravates the dangers of the country. The Assembly, which ought to be the most strenuous support of order, is become a focus of conspiracies. Three hundred patriotic members have not been able to stop its destructive career. Instead of making laws for the common good, it forges arms for civil war; it molests the power which I hold directly of the people; it encourages every bad passion; it endangers the peace of France: I have dissolved it; and I make the whole people a judge between it and me.

"The Constitution, you are aware, had been framed with the design of weakening beforehand the power you have entrusted

to me. Six millions of votes were a splendid protestation against it, and yet I conformed to it faithfully. I was provoked, I was calumniated, I was insulted, without complaining. But now that the fundamental compact is no longer respected, even by those who continually appeal to it; and that the men who have already ruined two monarchies would bind my hands, in order to destroy the Republic; it becomes my duty to baffle their perfidious projects, to support the Republic, and to rescue the country, by invoking the solemn judgment of the only sovereign which I acknowledge in France—the People.

"I appeal, therefore, frankly to the whole nation, and I say to you: if you wish to continue in this unsettled state which degrades us, and is prejudicial to the future, elect another in my room, for I scorn to hold a power which is impotent to do good, which renders me responsible for acts which I cannot prevent, and chains me to the helm whilst I see the ship drifting towards the rocks.

"If, on the contrary, you still feel confidence in me, give me the means of accomplishing the great mission with which you have entrusted me.

"This mission has for its object to close the era of revolutions, by satisfying the legitimate wants of the people, and by protecting them from corrupt and subversive passions. Its principal duty is to create institutions that will outlive us, and which at last will become the foundations whereon something enduring may be erected.

"Being convinced that an unstable authority, and the preponderance of a single Assembly, are permanent causes of discord and confusion, I submit to your votes the following fundamental

principles of a Constitution, which the Assemblies may hereafter develope:

"1st. A responsible Chief, appointed for ten years.

"2nd. Ministers solely dependent on the executive power.

"3rd. A Council of State, composed of the ablest men, to devise laws and discuss them before the Legislative Body.

"4th. A Legislative Body, to discuss the laws and vote upon them, to be elected by Universal Suffrage, without the list of votes being examined to annul the election.

"5th. A second Assembly, composed from the most eminent men in the country, an equiponderant power, to guard the fundamental compact, and the liberties of the people.

"This system, conceived by the First Consul at the opening of the century, has already given peace and prosperity to France; it would secure them once more.

"Such is my deep conviction. If you think as I do, let it appear in your votes. If, on the other hand, you prefer a government without strength, monarchical or republican, borrowed from some visionary past, or some chimerical future, answer by a negative vote.

"Thus, then, for the first time since 1804, you will vote with full intelligence of the matter, well knowing for whom and for what.

"If I do not obtain a majority of your votes, I shall summon a new Assembly to meet, and deliver to that body the mandate I have received from you.

"But, if you think that the cause which my name represents—that is to say, France regenerated by the Revolution of '89, and organized by the Emperor—is still yours, you will declare it by confirming the powers I ask of you.

"Then will France and Europe be preserved from anarchy, obstacles will be removed, party contests will disappear, for all men will respect the verdict of the people as the decree of Providence.

"Done at the Palace of the Elysée, 8th December, 1851,

"LOUIS NAPOLEON BONAPARTE."

VI.

REPORT FROM THE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF OF THE ARMY OF PARIS, ADDRESSED TO THE MINISTER OF WAR.

"Paris, 9th December, 1851.

"SIR,

"I have already had the honour to address to you an abridged report on the events which have dishonoured the 3rd and 4th of this present December, and to give you an account of the results obtained from the arrangements made to provide against these events.

"Now that the separate reports of the generals of division under my orders have reached me, I hasten to forward you the particulars requisite to complete my former report.

"As early as the morning of the 3rd, numerous crowds of fierce and sullen people had gathered together on various points; the different corps of the army of Paris went and took up their positions of defence.

"General Marulaz, whose brigade occupied the Place de la Bastille, having learnt that a barricade was being erected in the crossway between the Rue du Faubourg Saint-Antoine, and those of Cotte and Sainte-Marguerite, sent off in that direction three companies of the 19th of the light division, under the orders of

Commandant Pujol, and supported this movement by advancing at full speed at the head of a battalion of the 44th in the Rue de Charonne, so as to approach that barricade by the Rue de Cotte.

"The gathering, at the head of which were three representatives of the Mountain, seeing the troops coming up, opened a fire, and mortally wounded the fusilier Siran of the 44th line.

"The first platoon returned fire, and the representative Baudin was killed by the discharge on the barricade.

"In the afternoon, General Herbillon, who was posted in the square of the Hôtel de Ville, having heard that some barricades were being raised in the Rue du Temple, Rambuteau, Beaubourg, &c., immediately advanced on the points specified, at the head of a column formed of the 9th battalion of foot Chasseurs and a piece of artillery; he broke and overthrew every obstacle in his way, whilst a battalion of the 6th light division, posted in the Rue du Temple, destroyed several unfinished barricades.

"Later in the evening, other barricades having been built in the Rue Beaubourg, Colonel Chapuis, of the 3rd line, taking with him one of the battalions of his regiment and a company of engineers, passed through those districts once more, and sustained a smart fire, which could not check the spirit of his column. Every obstacle was levelled by the troops at full speed, and those who defended them were put to death.

"Gatherings which collected in other quarters were dispersed by the bold attitude of the troops.

"Seeing that the day had passed off in slight and insignificant skirmishes, and without any decisive result, and expecting that the object of the ringleaders was to harrass the troops, by successively exciting commotion in all quarters of Paris, I resolved to leave the

insurrection to itself for some time, to allow it an opportunity to take up its ground, to establish itself upon it, and finally to form a compact mass which I could come up to and fight with.

"With this view, I ordered off every small post, sent the troops back to their barracks, and waited.

"Early in the morning of the 4th, the reports of the prefects of police, and the intelligence of my own scouts, informed me that large bodies of rioters were forming in the districts of Saint-Antoine, Saint-Denis, Saint-Martin, and that they had begun raising barricades on those points.

"The focus of the insurrection appeared to lie within the space between the Boulevards and the Rues du Temple, Rambuteau, and Montmartre.

"At noon, I heard that the barricades were becoming formidable, and that the insurgents were fortifying themselves there; but I had determined not to attack them before two o'clock, and, my resolution being fully taken, I did not shorten the time, in spite of every entreaty on that head. I knew the spirit of my troops; I knew how eager they were to fight; and I was certain to subdue the insurrection in two hours, if it would fairly stand to do battle.

"Success has justified my expectation. The attack ordered for two o'clock was to take place by a convergent advance of the divisions of Carrelet and Levasseur.

"Consequently, the brigade Bourgon took up a position between the Porte Saint-Denis and the Porte Saint-Martin.

"Cotte and Canrobert's brigades united in one mass on the Boulevard des Italiens, whilst General Dulac occupied Pointe Saint-Eustache, and General Reibell's brigade of cavalry took up their ground in the Rue de la Paix.

"General Levasseur, resuming his position, formed his columns to sustain the advance of Carrelet's division.

"At two o'clock in the afternoon this whole body of troops pushed forward at once.

"Bourgon's brigade swept the whole Boulevard as far as the Rue du Temple, and, passing down that street as far as the Rue Rambuteau, carried every barricade on its passage.

"Cotte's brigade was engaged in the Rue Saint-Denis, whilst a battalion of the 15th light division filed through the Rue du Petit-Carreau, already barricaded.

"General Canrobert, having formed in position at the Porte Saint-Martin, marched through the Faubourg of that name and the neighbouring streets, obstructed by strong barricades, which the 5th battalion of foot Chasseurs, under the orders of Major evasson-Sorval, captured with rare intrepidity.

"General Dulac dispatched to attack the barricade in the Rue Rambuteau several columns, formed of Colonel Lourmel's three battalions of the 51st line, and of two other battalions, one the 19th line, the other the 43rd, flanked by a battery.

"At the same time, Herbillon's brigade, drawn up in two columns, one of which was directed by General Levasseur in person, forced its way into the focus of the insurrection by the Rues du Temple, Rambuteau, and Saint-Martin.

"General Marulaz operated towards the same point by the Rue Saint-Denis, directing a light column under the orders of Colonel La Motterouge, of the 19th division, to clear the side streets.

"On his side, General Courtigis, arriving from Vincennes at the head of his brigade, swept the Faubourg Saint-Antoine, in which several barricades had been thrown up.

"These different operations were conducted, under the fire of the insurgents, with a skill and ardour which did not leave any doubt as to the successful result. The barricades, attacked with cannon in the first place, were carried with the bayonet. All that part of the city lying between the Faubourgs Saint-Antoine and Saint-Martin, Pointe Saint-Eustache and the Hôtel de Ville, was ploughed in all directions by our columns of infantry; the barricades were carried and destroyed; the insurgents dispersed and slain. The gatherings which attempted to form their ranks again on the Boulevards were charged by General Reibell's cavalry, which sustained, at the top of the Rue Montmartre, a rather sharp fire of musketry.

"Assailed at once on every side, disconcerted by the irresistible energy of our troops, and by the united dispositions, which hemmed in, as in a network of iron, the ground on which they awaited us, the insurgents durst no longer undertake anything serious.

"At five o'clock in the evening, the troops of Carrelet's division came and resumed their position on the Boulevard.

"Thus, then, the attack, which had been opened at two o'clock, was concluded before five in the evening. The insurrection had been subdued on the ground chosen by itself.

"However, a few petty conflicts took place out of this ground, and I feel it my duty to mention them.

"On the 4th, about seven o'clock at night, some gatherings of insurgents, dispersed by the various columns, collected at the top of the Rue Saint-Honoré, in that of des Poulies, and several small adjacent streets, where they began to barricade themselves.

"Other gatherings had collected at the same time in the Rues Montmartre and Montorgueil, in which the large street lamps had

been put out, and where the insurgents, under cover of the darkness, had been able to raise new barricades.

"About eight o'clock, Colonel de Lourmel, of the 51st line, who remained in position near Pointe Saint-Eustache, although fully sensible of all the difficulty of an attack by night, made up his mind to commence an immediate assault with the 2nd battalion of his regiment.

"The four first barricades were carried at a running march, with the greatest energy, by the grenadiers and light infantry of that battalion. A fifth was still standing; it was higher, and better than the rest. In spite of the distance, in spite of the darkness, Colonel de Lourmel did not hesitate to take his measures to attack it. Fifteen grenadiers, under the orders of Sergeant Pitrois, were the first to spring forward, followed directly by the grenadiers and light infantry of the battalion, headed and encouraged by Commandant Jeannin.

"Nothing could resist the impetuosity of these brave soldiers. The barricade was carried, in spite of a most desperate resistance. A hundred insurgents, or thereabouts, defended it. Forty were killed on the spot, the rest were made prisoners. A hundred guns, arms of every kind, and ammunition in abundance, fell into the hands of our soldiers.

"Colonel Courant, of the 19th line, whose regiment occupied the National Palace, having been informed that a considerable number of insurgents, after being driven from Carré Saint-Martin, had rallied in the Place des Victoires, and were threatening the Bank of France and the neighbouring districts, hastened there with his regiment, carried the barricades of the Rue Pagevin and Fossés-Montmartre, and returned to take up his post at the Bank, whence

he was able to maintain the tranquillity of the quarters of the Bank and the Exchange.

"I should never have done citing names: I cannot, however, help doing justice to the ability and resolution with which Captain de la Roche d'Oisy, commanding the 4th company in the 1st battalion of the Gendarmerie Mobile, contrived, during the whole time of the insurrection, to preserve from insult the National Printing Office, incessantly surrounded by bodies of rioters.

"Several barricades were erected in the adjacent streets, for the purpose of cutting off every communication with that establishment. Lieutenant Fabre, of that company, at the head of twenty-five gendarmes, carried, at full speed, the most strongly built of these barricades, constructed with overturned coaches, with casks filled with paving-stones, and pieces of wood. The other barricades were successively stormed and destroyed, and traffic was restored and maintained by means of frequent patrols.

"At the Chapel Saint-Denis some companies of the 28th line carried numerous barricades, and preserved the peace of these populous districts, though they had been extensively agitated by the secret societies.

"Whilst these events were occurring on the right bank of the Seine, General Renault, commanding the 2nd division, occupied the left bank, and, by his skilful arrangements and the excellent behaviour of his troops, he was able to prevent any disturbance from breaking out amongst the industrial population of the 11th and 12th arrondissements (large districts), in which, at a former period, the insurrection had been joined by a large body of adherents.

"The division of reserve cavalry, under the orders of General Korte, sent from Versailles, took up its ground first in the Champs

Elysées, then on the Boulevards, and powerfully contributed, by a large number of strong patrols, to arrest a great many insurgents, and to the ultimate restoration of order.

"The reports which were sent in to me during the night of the 4th, respecting the state of Paris, having all but assured me that the insurrection would not dare to raise its head again, I drew off, about midnight, a portion of the troops from their defensive positions, to allow them the rest they had earned so well.

"The next day, the 5th December, I desired to show the whole army of Paris to the population, and, by means of such a demonstration, to encourage the well-disposed, and intimidate the malcontents.

"I ordered the infantry brigades, with their artillery and companies of engineers, to defile through the town in moveable columns, to march on the insurgents wherever they might still show themselves, and to carry and destroy every obstacle which might obstruct the streets.

"For this purpose, General Carrelet, leading one of the columns of his division, marched, about nine in the morning, to the barrier Rochechouart, where a formidable barricade was said to be still standing. But the insurgents, confounded and overwhelmed by the result of the events of the 4th, were afraid any longer to defend their entrenchments, and abandoned them at the approach of our troops.

"Another barricade, erected in the Faubourg Poissonnière, was likewise deserted by its defenders, before the arrival of the column under General Canrobert, ordered to storm and carry it.

"I have had much reason to be grateful for the able support of the general officers under my orders. All of them have observed my instructions with an intelligence and earnestness which fills me

with the warmest gratitude towards them. They have shown the troops the way which they so nobly followed.

"Unfortunately, such complicated operations could not be executed without painful losses. During the two days' engagements we had 25 killed, of whom one was an officer; and 184 wounded, of whom 17 were officers; among these is Colonel Quilico, of the 72nd line, whose arm was transpierced by a ball, at the very time that his lieutenant-colonel, Loubeau, fell by his side, mortally wounded. The whole army has sympathised with the regret felt by the 72nd line, for the loss of this superior officer of the highest distinction.

"The numerical weakness of our loss, compared with that of the insurgents; can only be explained by the energy with which our soldiers marched up to every obstacle, and the spirit with which they crushed the insurrection. In two hours' fighting the army of Paris obtained the wished-for result; it had worthily justified the confidence of the President of the Republic, and is conscious of having nobly contributed to save the cause of civil society in France, and possibly in Europe.

"I shall have the honour of sending you, very shortly, a list of the soldiers, of all ranks, who have appeared to me the best entitled to rewards, and to these I request you to call the benevolent attention and interest of the President of the Republic.

"Receive, Sir, the assurance of my

"Respectful and devoted attachment,

"MAGNAN,

"*Commander-in-Chief.*"

VII.

Among the documents to support this vindication, the author thinks it important to insert the following article, published on the 25th September, 1849, in the *Bulletin de Paris*, by M. de Latour-Dumoulin. This article, which fifteen months before, correctly expressed the views of Louis Napoleon, and foretold, almost with prophetic sagacity, the 2nd December, produced a deep sensation. The author had certainly received no intimation of the coming event, but the correctness of his judgment enlightened by his personal knowledge of the great character of the President of the Republic, had led him to anticipate the only possible conclusion. Perusing over again these lines, written a few months before the event they seem to announce, we fancy we hear the first patriotic call, which, at the signal given by a liberator's hand, was to awaken eight millions of voices to crush Socialism, and rescue society.

WHAT THE PRESIDENT INTENDS.

Public opinion has been excited in Paris, and in the departments, by the threatening attitude which the monarchical parties have assumed for two months.

The country alarmed has a right to know what would be the intentions of Louis Napoleon in case the royalists, of the two branches, whether separate or united, attempted to prevent the necessary prolongation of the President's authority.

These projects, which we think we divine, we will expose in a few words :

Louis Napoleon loudly disclaims any dynastic after-thought ; he does not covet any other prerogatives than those he now enjoys.

His exclusive aim is the re-establishment of order, security, and credit; it is, in a word, to close the era of revolutions.

But, to discharge the pacific commission reserved to him by Providence, the power of the President must needs be firm and lasting.

Louis Napoleon would not be responding to the wishes of six millions of citizens, who have elected him as the representative of the principles of order and sound progress, inaugurated in '89, were he to bow with humility before the royalist coalition which recklessly disturbs the country.

Louis Napoleon hopes, therefore, that as soon as the time comes to discuss once more the future fate of France—that is to say, either to place the power of the state on a solid basis, or to decree anarchy —the National Assembly will understand the duties which circumstances impose upon it, and the great responsibility it would assume before posterity, were it to hesitate to vote for the immediate revisal of the Constitution.

So that if the National Assembly, forgetting that France wishes above all to be saved, shall refuse to adopt a measure imperatively required for the public security, Louis Napoleon would not hesitate to make an appeal to that entire people whose mandate he has received.

And the people would determine whether the President of the Republic must take for his device—ABDICATION or PERSEVERANCE!

THE END.